



MORDAUNT.

SKETCHES

OF

LIFE, CHARACTERS, AND MANNERS,

IN

VARIOUS COUNTRIES;

INCLUDING THE

MEMOIRS

OF

A FRENCH LADY OF QUALITY.

BY THE

AUTHOR OF ZELUCO & EDWARD.

VOL. III.

Ficta voluptatis causa sint proxima veris.

HOR.

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MORDAUNT.

LETTER LXVI.

*The Honourable JOHN MORDAUNT to Colonel
SOMMERS.*

Rose-Mount.

YOU perceive the rain continues. I will give you a sketch of a curious conversation that took place yesterday.

Some gentlemen of the neighbourhood dined with us. The discourse turned on the present unhappy state of Europe. Governor Flint, according to custom, inveighed vehemently against the whole French nation. One gentleman implored his clemency in favour of the emigrant nobility and clergy, who were the severest sufferers by the revolution the governor reprobated. No—It was suffi-

cient that they were French. The ancient governors of that nation, according to him, were as weak as the present are wicked—naming a few of the most eminent of the former.—“ See what a figure they now cut !” said he ; and then drew a comparison between them and certain persons in high situations in this country.

“ If you wish to weigh the respective importance of two set of men,” said lord Cardon, “ it is not fair to put one into the scale, ornamented with stars, and ribbons, and mitres, and robes, and large periwigs, and place the other in the opposite scale, stripped quite naked. The high nobility and clergy of France were as much respected, while they retained their situations, as those of any country in Europe ; and heaven only knows what sort of a figure our own would cut in the character of emigrants ! Let me tell you, governor, it is a difficult roll for even the greatest men to support with dignity.”

There was, after this, some difference of opinion respecting the origin of the war.

“Whoever were the real beginners of the war,” said my brother, “the French are indisputably the cause of its having continued so long; for our minister was, assuredly, disposed to make peace, on reasonable terms, when the negociation commenced at Lifle.”

“Making peace at that time would have been of no use,” said governor Flint; “for the French would have recommenced the war before this time.”

“No mortal can be absolutely certain of that,” lord Cardon observed.

“Does not your lordship imagine that the French of the present times are wicked enough to renew the war as soon as they think it for their advantage?”

“In that,” replied lord Cardon, “I have a great notion that the French of the present times bear a strong resemblance to the French of former times, and to the other nations of Europe. But although I am convinced, with

you, governor, that they would be wicked enough to renew the war as soon as they should think it for their advantage, I have hopes of their being wise enough to think, for a long time at least, that it would *not* be for their advantage."

"They will *always* think it for their advantage," replied the governor; "they cannot exist without war."

"Nay, then," said Travers, "you cannot blame them for continuing it."

"Not blame the French!" exclaimed the other.

"No, sir, I could not in conscience blame the devil for persevering in what is for his advantage," resumed Travers. "If, therefore, the French cannot exist without war, this war, instead of being a seven-years' war, or a thirty-years' war, must be a war everlasting."

"That does not necessarily follow," said governor Flint.

"What follows, then?" Travers asked.

"We may extirpate the rascals!" cried the governor.

"That, indeed, is an expedient which did not occur to me: but as rascals are not easily extirpated," continued Travers, "I should think the easiest and most natural way of putting an end to the war would be by making peace, as soon as it can be done, on reasonable terms."

"That language smells a little of Jacobinism," said the governor.

"Whatever its smell may be," retorted Travers, "it is less in the spirit of Jacobinism than your own language; for the Jacobins breath nothing but extirpation."

"I wish extirpation to all the enemies of my country," said Flint.

"I wish ruin to all their schemes against my country," rejoined Travers; "for I love my country as much as you can, governor, though I am not paid for it by a sinecure office."

“ A sinecure office !” cried the governor.
“ Do you *infer* that I would not love my country if I had not a sinecure office ?”

“ No, sir,” answered Travers; “ I *only infer* that you would love your country for a lucrative office of any kind.”

The laugh which proceeded from the company increased the indignation of the governor.

“ Do you *infer*, sir,” — said he, and was proceeding in great warmth, when my brother, clapping him on the shoulder, said—

“ Come, come, governor, let us have no more of *inferences*. We all equally abhor Jacobins and their principles ; and we also know that very improper *inferences* are sometimes drawn from innocent or well-meant expressions.”

To assist my brother in restoring the good-humour of the company—

“ That is very true, my lord,” rejoined Lord Cardon ; “ and I will give you a curious

instance, which came under my own observation when I was last at my estate in —shire.

“ I had, with great pleasure, observed that the vaunting proclamations of the French directory, and their repeated threats of invading this island, had excited general indignation over the country, augmented the zeal and affection of the inhabitants towards his majesty and the royal family, and increased their detestation of all whom they suspected to harbour different sentiments. At such periods there is always some risk that base-minded persons will attempt to make a merit with their superiors, by misconstruing the innocent or indifferent words or actions of their neighbours, and bringing them forward as proofs of disloyalty or treasonable intentions.

“ Instances of this kind may have occurred where the accuser himself was fully convinced of the innocence of the accused. This which I am going to mention was not of that atrocious nature. Here the accuser was as

innocent as the accused, however ridiculous the accusation may appear.

“ I was called on, one morning, by a person who has a considerable property in the county, but whom I knew to be wonderfully weak and hot-headed.

“ He told me, as soon as he could articulate (for, when he entered, he was out of breath), ‘ that a wealthy farmer in the neighbourhood had committed high-treason !’

“ High treason !—How ?”

“ By speaking disrespectfully of his majesty, and other branches of the royal-family,’ he answered.

“ I could not believe that the man had been guilty of a thing so revolting.

“ He said ‘ he could not have believed it himself, if he had not received it from those who knew it by ocular demonstration, having heard, with their *own ears*, the very words which the farmer had pronounced.’

“ I desired him to repeat the expressions.

“ He said that the expressions were—‘ That

the king was not a Christian monarch ; and that their royal highnesses the prince of Wales, the duke of York, and the duke of Clarence, ought not to be trusted.'

" Though I thought this a most unlikely story," continued lord Cardon ; " and, particularly so, as I had always heard the farmer spoken of as a religious and good kind of a man ; yet I determined to make a careful inquiry into the truth of the accusation, and to have him prosecuted, if it was well founded.

" On investigation, the fact turned out to be this :—The farmer, with others, had been drinking at a public-house. One of the company had said, ' He hoped there would soon be peace all over Europe :'—to which the farmer answered—‘ That no Christian monarch would offer to make peace with such infidels as the French.' The former had rejoined, ' That *some* crowned heads had already shown a disposition towards peace.' On which the farmer said—‘ That we ought not to put our trust in princes.'

“ This conversation,” added his lordship, “ had been repeated to the person who brought me the information, in the presence of an attorney of the village, who remarked ‘ that the farmer’s discourse was treasonable, because it implied that his majesty, who had offered to make peace with the French, was not a Christian; and that the prince of Wales, duke of York, and duke of Clarence, who were all princes, were not to be trusted.’

“ When the investigation was completed—‘ Now,’ said my informer, ‘ is not your lordship convinced that those expressions respecting his majesty amount to high-treason?’

“ I told him—‘ that I did not think they amounted to *quite* so much, because the original author of that caution against our putting trust in princes was a king himself.’

“ The man seemed a good deal startled at this.

“ He declared, ‘ that he was entirely ignorant of that circumstance.’

“ He not only was a king,’ said I, ‘ but he had a numerous family of sons, and all his sons were princes ; so that it was not probable that he had any wish to calumniate either princes or kings ; particularly his present majesty, king George the Third, who, though of a different character, in some respects, from king David, yet was, in common with him, a great king, and the father of princes.’

“ This representation,” added lord Cardon, “ seemed to have great influence on the mind of my informer. He began to suspect that he had given too great weight to the inferences made by the attorney ; declaring, ‘ that they would not have made such an impression as they did, if he had not known that the farmer was a presbyterian ; which, in his opinion,’ he said, ‘ was much the same as a papist.’

“ After I had praised his zeal and loyalty, he took his leave ; but returned before he had got five steps from the door, to put me in

mind ‘to admonish the farmer to be more guarded in his language in future.’”

Nothing could exceed the humour with which lord Cardon narrated this story. The company in general seemed highly entertained. But I do not remember ever to have been witness to a stronger instance of a man’s insensibility to his own particular failings, and all alive to those of his neighbours, than when I heard the governor remark—“That, though weak people were apt to expose themselves to ridicule by intemperate zeal, *a conduct which nobody despised more than he did*, yet it was an evil of little importance, in comparison with the mischief which would result from permitting traitors, and friends to France, to spread their abominable doctrines without check, and to assist the designs of the public enemy.”

To prevent Travers, who seemed impatient to comment on the governor’s observation, my brother immediately said—“That nothing could be more just than the gover-

nor's remark ; and it was equally true, that though the one was more mischievous, the other was more probable ; for base-minded men had been found, in all ages and countries, ready to give false or exaggerated accusations, from blind zeal or interested motives ; but nothing seemed less likely, than that Englishmen could be so absurdly wicked as to assist those whose evident plan is to lay waste their country, seize their property, and overturn that constitution, under which they have, for above a century, enjoyed more liberty, and more happiness, than any other people, ancient or modern."

" Wicked and absurd as that may seem, my lord," said the governor, " I am convinced, that the spirit of party can carry some men, and those not of the lowest, or even middle rank in life, that length."

" It is evident," added Travers, " that prejudice, and the spirit of party, can carry some men very absurd lengths."

" *You* said, sir," resumed the governor,

who could not be diverted from Travers,
“ that the spirit of party carried men great
lengths.”

“ I did so,” replied Travers.

“ But when it carries them the length of
treason, and of abetting the French,” re-
joined the governor, with a furious accent,
“ I hope you have no objection to their being
hanged, drawn, and quartered?”

“ Not the least, sir,” said Travers.
“ Let them be hanged for traitors, drawn
for fools, and quartered for your amusement;
but, in the first place, let them have a fair
trial.”

“ D—n me, if I think traitors deserve any
trial at all !” rejoined the governor.

To prevent farther dispute, my brother or-
dered coffee; and the governor, who could
no longer bear the sight of Travers, left us
soon after.

In a short conversation I had with lord
Cardon, I observed that, “ notwithstanding the
careless manner and inattentive air of my

friend Travers, he had the faculty of distinguishing characters."

" That is," replied lord Cardon, " certainly a very useful faculty; but what, perhaps, is still more useful, is the faculty of concealing some of the discoveries we make, and allowing men to believe that we think them just what they wish to appear. This is a talent which I fear your friend, Mr. Travers, has not acquired. He too plainly shows that he sees through the disguise men are prone to assume—a degree of penetration as offensive to the affected and hypocritical as wit generally is to the dull."

Adieu, my dear Sommers.

J. MORDAUNT.

LETTER LXVII.

From the Same to the Same.

Rose-Mount.

My brother has at length opened himself fully to me on the grand article. He took an early opportunity after lord Cardon had left us. Indeed, I threw it in his way ; for knowing a discussion on that point was abiding me, I wished to have it over.—I have always had this impatience of temper. If I were convinced that I could not avoid being hanged or married to-morrow, I should be inclined to have which-ever of the ceremonies I was doomed to performed to-night.

In consequence of a hint I gave Travers, he ordered his horses after breakfast, and told me, in my lord's hearing, that he should not return till the hour of dinner. My brother soon after began the attack, marching over all the old ground,—‘ his own delicate health,

the kind of epileptic complaint he had been subject to, the dread of transmitting it to his posterity, the satisfaction it would afford him to know that his estate and title would descend to the children of a brother he loved, and not to a family he had so much reason to be displeased with.” To all this I made no other answer than, “that I was convinced he viewed his own health in a worse light than his physicians did; that he had been free of the attacks for a long interval; and possibly they might never return,” &c. &c. &c.

He interrupted me, shaking his head, with an air of incredulity, and asked, “Whether I was perfectly free from all amorous engagement; because, if I was not, he would abstain from making to me the proposal he intended.”

Though it instantly struck me, that a pretended entanglement of that nature would free me from farther solicitation on a subject highly irksome, yet I overcame the temptation, and fairly acknowledged, “that I was free from all

particular engagement, though no man loved the sex in general more."

He then began an eulogium on matrimony, the comforts attending a regular uniform life in the society of an agreeable woman, the advantages attending entering early into that state, by which a man had the happiness of directing the education, and forming the minds, of his children, with the prospect of seeing them rise and prosper in the world.

I could easily have ballanced this last article with instances of an opposite complexion; but I only hinted it in general terms, with regard to the uniformity he had mentioned. I said "that I never had derived much comfort from that quarter; that those people who were uniformly surrounded with what they called their comforts seemed to me to live the most insipid comfortless life in the world; they made no exertions, overcame no difficulties: that I had a curiosity often to go where comforts of their kind were not to be found, and had enjoyments which those

who were wallowing in comforts could not taste ; yet, when I returned from such excursions, I could, for a time, relish their comforts as much as and more than those who thought of nothing but pampering and living snugly did ; that I was so unluckily framed, that persisting long in a continual jog-trot of comforts tired me, even although a plentiful table, an easy carriage, and a soft bed, were of the number ; that I knew very well that he could give me instances of prudenter people, who thought very differently, who, for the sake of those very comforts, had bound themselves to insipid companions, and disagreeable bedfellows, for life ; and would drawl on until they were cut short by an apoplexy, or suffocated by fat, and decently interred in a church-yard ; but that, for my own part, I could not help preferring the free life of a bachelor, for some time longer at least, to all those comforts."

My brother laughed the more willingly at this sketch, because he saw it was partly

taken from an unhappy kinsman of our own, who, being in easy circumstances, had married a widow of great wealth and corpulency; and, though the woman was of so quiet a disposition, that her voice was hardly ever heard in the family, except when she was in labour, he became so ashamed of what little she spoke, that he carried her to the country, sunk into low spirits, and has as little relish for the comforts she brought him, as, from the beginning, he had had for herself:—there the poor man remains, waiting impatiently for one or other of the catastrophes above mentioned.

Resuming a serious air, my brother said, in an earnest and most affectionate manner, “ You cannot imagine, my dear Jack, that I am so unreasonable and selfish as to expect that you shall make a sacrifice of your happiness to my whim or vanity. I acknowledge, that it would be a very great satisfaction to me to see you happily married: in your children I should behold the future inheritors of my fortune and title; but I willingly give up every idea

of that enjoyment until you meet with a woman entirely to your taste."

"It is the easiest thing in the world," replied I, "to find a woman to my taste : the difficulty or hardship lies in my being bound to her for life."

"Without that circumstance, you know, my dear brother, that, by the laws of our country, what I have in view cannot be accomplished." He then expressed astonishment at the singular aversion I seemed to have against marriage, enumerated the number of marriages among people of rank of late.—By the way, matrimony was never in my time so very much the ton. Though, in many particulars, the young fellows of the present age imitate the manners of the age of Charles II.; yet, in this, they follow the example of Henry VIII. who, when he took a fancy for a woman, thought of no other expedient but marrying her. It is fortunate for the wives of some of those gentlemen, however, that they have not the power of that tyrant, who, whenever he tired

of a wife, thought of no other resource but cutting off her head.

Among the list of marriages, my brother did not omit yours, my dear Sommers ; and enlarged on the account that had been given him of your happiness, and the admirable qualities of your Juliet.

To all this I answered (for I wished to give the whole discussion an air of jocularity) “ that although I had always endeavoured to be in the fashion, yet it was more dangerous to indulge my inclination in this present point than in any other ; because fashions were apt to change, and, if once I adopted this, it might not be in my power to conform to the new mode, however much it might be my inclination, when the taste for a single life should prevail.”

“ You will have your friend Sommers, at least, to keep you in countenance,” said he ; “ and, I am sure, you would be better pleased to be classed with him, than with those idle young fellows of fashion who attempt to turn the married state into ridicule.”

“ I am not sure of being classed with Sommers, my lord. The rare qualities which you have just enumerated, as belonging to Mrs. Sommers, and of which I have had the same account from others, render it highly improbable that such another woman is to be met with, and still more that she would condescend to marry me.”

“ But in case a woman shall be met with who possesses equal accomplishments with Mrs. Sommers, and who is also humble enough to be willing to marry you, do you, in that case, promise to pay your court to her ?”

“ Who is to be the judge of the respective merits of the two ladies ?”

“ You yourself.”

“ In that case I agree.”

“ To make any comparison of this invidious kind,” resumed my brother, “ would be improper ; but I will make our agreement still more favourable for you ; because, were I even to find a woman whom you could not,

in your conscience, think inferior in beauty and accomplishments to Mrs. Sommers, still she might not hit so capricious a fancy as yours : in that case I should not insist on your proposing marriage to her. It is only in the event that the woman, I shall at some future period mention, does please you, that I shall claim the performance of your agreement."

" Why, in that event," said I, " do not you imagine that I should act as you wish without any agreement?"

" I question it very much," replied he. " I imagine your prejudice against matrimony is so strong, that it would keep you from proposing marriage even to the woman you love and esteem, lest you should not *continue* to love and esteem her. And it is this whimsical notion alone I wish to guard against by our agreement. If I do not point out a woman, whom, on acquaintance, you shall love and esteem above all others, I shall willingly sacrifice my favourite wish to see you married : but, if I do find such a wo-

man, I expect that you will sacrifice your whim, dread, caprice (call it what you please), to my favourite wish."

So very friendly and candid a proposal could not be resisted. I promised to abide conscientiously by the conditions.

This agreement, however, would give me more uneasiness, if I thought it at all probable that he could find a woman with the requisites conditioned for.

Adieu ! dear Sommers.

J. MORDAUNT.

LETTER LXVIII.

The Same to the Same.

Rose-Mount

THOUGH I have been long convinced that my brother had some particular lady in view for me, yet I was not able, till very lately, to form a probable conjecture who the unfortunate woman could be : I say unfortunate, because there is but too much reason to think that a woman of delicacy would run a great risk of being unhappy as my wife, however attentively I might continue to behave to her after passion was gone. My brother avoids all explanation on that head. He expects, I suppose, that his plan is more likely to succeed by my meeting the lady, as if it were accidentally.

From an expression that fell from him unawares, and from some other circumstances, I am almost convinced that lady Amelia Melton is the woman my brother wishes me united

to.—She is a young lady of distinguished beauty, accomplished, and, in point of birth and fortune, superior to what I have a right to expect.

Immediately before I went last abroad, I met her at Bath; and, during the time I remained there, was a good deal in her company.—I was then struck both with her beauty and accomplishments. You, I believe, have never seen her.—Were I to describe her face to you, feature by feature, you would have the idea of as handsome a woman as could be conceived: yet, when you came to see her, you would recollect having seen still more beautiful women. Lady Amelia's features are all regular, and, separately considered, seem perfect; but the union of the whole is somewhat deficient in animation. Her conversation is always sensible, without being lively or very entertaining. Though she never knew any difficulty herself, yet she is ready to assist those who are in distressed circum-

flances: and, what in the eyes of some may appear more meritorious, though in mine it is less amiable, she seems to perform acts of benevolence more from a sense of duty than from any very warm sympathy with the distress of the persons she relieves. While in lady Amelia's company, you cannot fail being pleased with her appearance, and approving of what she says: when out of her company, she is apt to be out of your memory. Her real presence is necessary to keep up the fervor of her adorers.

She lost both her parents when she was only eleven years of age; a misfortune great in itself, because they were both of excellent characters, but rendered still greater from the circumstance of her being put, from that time, under the care of her aunt, lady Aspic, who, at one period of her life, was pretty generally thought one of the handsomest and proudest women in England. It is now several years since she lost *one half* of that reputa-

tion—the other she retains in full force, and evidently borrows all the aid that paint can lend her to retain both.

The high value she puts on her opinions appears in the slow decided tone in which she pronounces them. Her health was at one time a little injured by dissipation and fashionable hours. Instead of remedying this, by removing the cause, she applied to medicine to remove the effect while the cause was continued. Her health is now more broken than ever. Her discourse, which formerly consisted of slanderous anecdotes, is now interlarded with the nauseous jargon of tremors, bile, nerves, &c.

Nothing, therefore, could be more unfortunate for lady Amelia than to be obliged to live with a woman of this cast. Whoever is early accustomed to that kind of discourse is apt to make it a prevailing topic of discourse through life, and to become needlessly and whimsically solicitous about the state of their

health. All persons of this disposition are as certain to be governed by physicians or apothecaries as bigots are by priests and father-confessors. Perhaps I have caught, from my friend Travers, part of this aversion to the company of those who are eternally speaking and thinking of their complaints, past, present, and to come: but, from whoever it is derived, few things seem to me so oppressive. I was highly pleased with what captain —— of the navy once said to me.—In spite of the severe shock which his constitution received by his long residence in the West Indies, he retains all his natural cheerfulness: and [on my observing to him, that I never heard him complain of his health—“ Nor never shall,” replied he, “ that being a subject which would give my friends pain: I reserve it for those to whom it may, perhaps, afford pleasure, and speak of it only to the doctors.”]

This habit (for it is entirely a habit which,

like others, ‘increases by indulgence) is more odious in women than in men. For my part, were sentence of immediate marriage to be pronounced on me, I should beg in mercy to be coupled to a woman who never had heard that nerves, veins, arteries, or bile, formed any part of her composition.

My friend Dr. P—, a man versed in the science, and disdaining the mummery of his profession, assured me that few things are more pernicious than such topics of discourse, and nothing more infectious to young women than the sight of others under what are called nervous attacks. He declared “ that he had once known a whole boarding-school thrown into fits by the example of one hysterical girl. Some he conceived to be really so affected, others were suspected of acting the part, to be excused from some task, or, perhaps, merely with a view to become an object of attention and sympathy.”

I will mention another instance of the force

of this kind of contagion, which, however extravagant it may seem, is, nevertheless, literally true.

I had once a footman, who came to me directly from the service of lady Aspic. With the legs and shoulders of an Irish chairman, this fellow had the cheeks of a German trumpeter. He occasionally consulted the apothecary who attended the family, and was by him assured that he had nerves and bile as well as his mistress.

Before his being engaged in this lady's service, the man had always been under the necessity of working a great deal, and eating very moderately ; of course he could have digested more victuals than he eat; but afterwards, having little to do, and being allowed to eat as much as he pleased, he generally eat more than he could digest. This, at last, deprived him of what he had never felt the want of before, and his chief anxiety was derived from a new source :—instead of labouring for vic-

tuals to his appetite, he applied to the apothecary for an appetite to his viuctuals ; but, not satisfied with the stomachic bitters and other medicines sent to himself, he occasionally preferred those directed for his mistress ; and being more pleased with either the effect or taste of her nervous draughts than his own, he continued to steal them without remorse, until, being detected, he was dismissed her service, and soon after was engaged in mine, where, as Ben always rode out with me, he had little or nothing to do, but to meditate on his nerves, and his bile, and his flatulencies, which, he had learned from the apothecary, were the origin of all his misery. I was a little surprised, one morning, to see this fellow enter the room without being called. He told me, in a doleful voice, “ that he was afraid he was infected with the hysterics, for he had a palpitation and a beating in his veins, which, he dreaded, would reach his arteries, if it was not stopped in time ; for he

felt a dejection of spirits, and was ready to cry."

I ordered him to go and cry below stairs; and next day paid him his wages and dismissed him.

When he had spent his money, he came and told me that he was in great distress, and begged that I would recommend him to some other service.—I said "that no service would suit him so well as His majesty's; and that, if he pleased, I would recommend him to my friend, colonel W—, of the foot-guards."

He accordingly enlisted as a grenadier. I met him some months after in the park, and asked "how his hysterics went on?" He swore that the drill-serjeant had driven them entirely away before he had completely learned his exercise.—"And your palpitations," continued I:—"being now a soldier, I hope you are free from them?"

"That I am," said he. "There is no such disease in our brigade; as the French

will find, come when they will.—Your honour has made a complete cure of me."

"A complete cure deserves a fee," rejoined I: "and as it will be more convenient for you to receive than to pay it, here is a guinea for you."

I have since been assured that he is as alert a soldier as any in the corps. Thus an useful subject was made of a man, who, had he been allowed to remain in the lady's service, was in danger of becoming, from mere indolence and example, an effeminate, puffy, miserable wretch, for life.

Now, if this kind of discourse and example could have such influence on a robust fellow, I leave you to judge what it is likely to have on a delicate girl.

I do remember that, during the time I visited lady Amelia at Bath, her aunt was continually admonishing her about her health; narrating the dire effects of open windows and piercing air; interdicting one dish, and re-

commending another ; in short, doing all in her power to subject a girl in good health to all the inconveniences of one in bad, and, perhaps, rendering her a miserable, fickle drug-taker for life.

I could not help thinking that such admonitions and such discourse tended to produce two pernicious effects—to render her constitution more delicate, and her ears less so than they originally had been. And were a woman as beautiful as Helen, as virtuous as Penelope, with the infinite variety of Cleopatra, she would be odious to me if she seemed to take delight in medical discourse, or could bear the most distant allusions to certain subjects, when conversing with any person except her physician. This circumstance has brought the attachments I have experienced in the course of my life to certain women, particularly French women, to a termination, sooner than otherwise would have happened.

I have a great notion that I shall have occasion to write soon more particularly of lady Aspic and her niece.

Meanwhile, I am, &c.

J. MORDAUNT.

LETTER LXIX.

From the Same to the Same.

Rose-Mount.

IT happened as I expected. I had accidentally heard that lady Aspic, with her niece, had arrived at the duchess-dowager of ——, who lives, at present, at no great distance from my brother's.

Knowing that he has the highest esteem for her grace, I was somewhat surprised that he had not proposed to pay her a visit. As he did make this proposal, however, immediately after the arrival of those two ladies, I was no longer at a loss for his reason for not proposing it sooner.

He did not mention to me his knowledge of lady Amelia being with the duchess, and I allowed him to remain in the belief that I was as ignorant of that circumstance as he thought I was.

Lady Aspic is an acquaintance of Mr.

Plaintive. I knew that Travers had sometimes visited her with him.

When the day was fixed for our visit to the duchess, I informed Travers what company was with her grace, and added—“Your uncle will be glad to receive from you a particular account of lady Aspic’s health : I hope, therefore, you will take the jaunt with us.”

“I thank you kindly,” replied he, making a very wry face : “but I would just as soon take a dose of physic.”

“What shall I say to my brother ? He expects you will accompany us.”

“Tell him I am engaged to dine with the parson—He is a very worthy fellow.”

“*That* he is. But, to my knowledge, he set out for London yesterday.”

“Tell him I am to dine with the parson’s mother—She is a very worthy woman, and never complains of her health.”

My brother, I knew, would not be ill pleased that Travers did not accompany us, which was my reason for informing him that lady Aspic was with the duchess.

When my brother and I arrived at her grace's, we found the duchefs alone. After half an hour of agreeable conversation, lady Aspic entered. She entertained us with the history of a head-ache, which, before she had finished, began to infect me.—“ It was occasioned,” she said, “ by vexation on account of her niece, lady Amelia, who had been indisposed.”

The duchefs expressed surprise, as well as uneasiness; saying—“ that she had never seen lady Amelia look better than when they separated the preceding night.”

“ Looks are fallacious,” said lady Aspic; “ but I observed her to change colour a little before she retired: on which account I persuaded her to take some drops, which always agree with her; and, accordingly, though she seemed a little sickish after taking them, she was better towards morning, and will appear at dinner.”

Though I had seen lady Aspic immediately before I went last abroad, and knew that she laid on *white*, as well as *red*, pretty liberally,

yet that seemed nothing, when compared to the profusion in which she deals in those articles now. The pains she takes to conceal age and wrinkles render them more apparent. Her grey locks, fantastically twisted and perfumed, her cheeks deeply rouged, and her youthful dress, brought Shakspeare's lines to my recollection :—

“ Hoary-headed frosts
Fall in the fresh lap of the crimson rose ;
And on old Hymen's chin, and icy crown,
An odorous chaplet of sweet summer-buds
Is, as in mockery, set.”—

A gentleman of the neighbourhood, with whom I was unacquainted, was announced ; and, soon after, two of the most spruce figures I ever beheld ; the one a clergyman, the other an officer.

It was evident, that in the dress of the first an anxious attention had been paid to be up to the summit of the fashion, in the most minute particular : and though he kept within the limits prescribed by custom for the eccl-

siaistics of this country, yet the whole of his drefs betrayed this gentleman's desire to overleap them, and get to something more buckish.

Travers has since told me, "that this young man, whose name is Milliner, had received a liberal education, of which few traces remain, except his knowledge and taste in the cut of clothes, which he acquired at the university, from some young students of fashion with whom he was acquainted there, and in whose company he made frequent excursions to the capital. He is," continued Travers, "always silent when any religious or literary subject is introduced into conversation ; but he can speak very eloquently on the cut of a frock, a button, or a button-hole ; and makes a very pretty figure in a pulpit, in all respects, except preaching.—My friend, the reverend Dick Milliner," he added, " has only two moderate livings at present ; but it is thought he cannot be long without getting one of

greater value; for, besides his knowledge of drefs, he plays very well on the piano-forte; and few, unless it be professed singers, excel him at a catch."

The officer was dressed in a brilliant uniform, with a most umbrageous helmet on his head, and an immense sabre fastened to his side, and trailing on the ground. This warlike figure I soon recognised to be no other than Billy Vapour. Perhaps you may forget the name—but you must remember the little trim gentleman whom Travers accused of multiplying his person, like Henry the Fourth at the battle of Shrewsbury: and when somebody said "that Mr. Vapour was no conjuror"—"How, then, will you account," said Travers, "for his having been seen in three fruit-shops, two auction rooms, the Exhibition, and Panorama, all much about the same time?"

Billy now belongs to a volunteer-corps of light-horse quartered in this neighbourhood; and as he, as well as Mr. Milliner, is a di-

stant relation of lady Aspic, the duchefs had sent both an invitation to-dinner.

Though captain Vapour's jacket fits as close to his body as that of Harlequin, yet, as his movements are also somewhat in the style of that gentleman, in whirling round to place a screen between lady Aspic and the fire, he whisked a book off the table on the floor.—“Lord!” cried lady Aspic, “you military gentlemen pay no attention to books. Let me see what book you have thrown down.”

“It is a volume of Spencer's ‘Fairy-Queen,’ which your ladyship, no doubt, has read,” said the duchefs.

“Fairy-queen!” replied lady Aspic; “no, I cannot say I have: nor, indeed, did I know that Spencer had ever written a book: but people of all ranks write books now-a-days.—How does your grace like it?”

“I like it very much,” said the duchefs.
“In my opinion, it is not so much read as it deserves to be.”

“ After what your grace has said, I shall certainly read every word of it, when I have finished an exceeding pretty thing that I received lately from the circulating library. Nothing of equal genius has appeared since ‘ Betsy Thoughtless.’ ”

The duchess, who is as good-natured as polite, introduced another topic.

She complimented captain Vapour on the appearance of his troop, which she had seen exercise on the preceding day.

He regretted “ that her grace had not seen them when first raised, and when their clothes were new ; because the men had been since so much harassed with field-days, and damaged with rainy weather, that they had lost a good deal of their military appearance.”

“ I understand that your lieutenant-colonel is a very active and intelligent officer,” rejoined the duchess.

“ Active enough,” said Billy : “ he works and wears us to such a degree, that in a little

while, in my opinion, the regiment will not be worth looking at."

" He is more solicitous that it should make a good appearance before the enemy, than on the parade," said the duchess.

" It is a hundred to one, however," said captain Vapour, " against its ever appearing before the enemy: whereas, it must appear on the parade every day."

" I should not think the chance of your seeing the enemy so small as you mention," resumed her grace; " for I understand your colonel, and the officers, are disposed to offer their services in Ireland, if necessary.

" Not all the officers, I can assure your grace," said the captain.

" I do think," resumed lady Aspic, " that fatiguing marches to distant parts of the island, and serving in other countries, ought to be confined to the mercenary army. The ministry, in my opinion, are to blame, in allowing such services to fall on the militia, or

volunteer-corps, whose officers are private gentlemen, and men of family."

I must assure you, by the way, Sommers, that however ridiculous you may think some of lady Aspic's sentiments, half of the ridicule is lost to those who do not hear them uttered by herself. She speaks in a slow, quavering tone, through her nose—a habit she first contracted by twisting up that feature when she spoke to those whom she considered beneath her; in which class she includes the whole human race, except such English nobility whose titles are higher, or of a more ancient date, than that of her father. As for foreign nobility, she makes no account of them at all. This habit is now so confirmed, that, even when she addresses those to whom she wishes to be respectful, she cannot entirely divest herself of it: yet her nasal quaver was in a more mellow tone, when she spake to the duchess and my brother, than when she addressed any other person in the company.

“ Suppose the French were to elude the vigilance of our fleet, and actually land,” said the duchess.

“ Suppose they should,” replied lady Aspic.—“ If every regiment of militia and volunteer-corps shall defend the county or parish to which they belong, your grace cannot help observing that the whole kingdom will be defended.”

The solemn and decided tone in which lady Aspic pronounced this almost overcame her grace’s gravity: she durst not trust herself with any answer: which my brother observing, said—“ Your ladyship’s plan would unquestionably be a considerable alleviation of the fatigues of war to our militia and volunteer-corps.”

“ I do assure you, my lord,” resumed her ladyship, “ that, to my certain knowledge, though they do not like to complain, yet many of them begin to feel the war rather inconvenient; and the more so, on account of this new mode of transporting the militia

to serve in other countries. All innovations are dangerous, my lord. This abominable French revolution was entirely owing to a spirit of innovation. Does not your lordship think so ?

“ In a great measure, assuredly,” replied he. “ Altogether, depend upon it, my lord,” continued she, “ nothing is more dangerous than taking men out of their usual line of life. It is highly reasonable that noblemen and gentlemen, who enter into the army as a profession, should be obliged to serve in foreign countries, or sell their commissions. It is also proper that clergymen should be obliged to preach occasionally, until they attain the rank of bishops ; but it would be cruel to expect it afterwards. The militia should be confined to the protection of the county to which they belong, and sent to no other, for fear of accidents. Volunteer corps should be reviewed when the weather is good, and receive their colours from women of quality. All classes of people should remain within the

limits for which nature intended them ; the high should continue high, the low should remain low, with a middle rank between the two. The original source of the horrid French revolution was removing low men from their proper spheres, and making them legislators. I hope there are no instances of the same kind in the class to which your lordship belongs."

"I hope," replied my brother, "we are in no danger of imitating the conduct of those who at present govern France, in that, or in any thing else."

"Yet those very five villains of the Directory, as it is called," resumed lady Aspic, "who make such a shocking figure in the eyes of all Europe as statesmen, may, perhaps, formerly have excelled in their respective professions. Indeed, I have heard,—for what can be said in favour of criminals should be told as well as what is against them—I have been assured, I say, that one leading member of their convention was, previous to the revolution, a very reputable butcher. All

the members of the directory may have been as highly distinguished in their particular lines as he was in his ; but it ought not to have been presumed that they were equally fit for governing kingdoms. All the mischief they have produced has arisen from their having been removed from the sphere in which they were useful. Is there no persuading the wretches," continued she, in the same drawling nasal monotony with which she had begun, " Is there no persuading the creatures, I say, to return to the making of shoes, and of fricassees, and all their former occupations, and leave the world in peace ?—Do you not think, my lord, that this is mightily to be wished ?"

" I certainly do," replied my brother.

" Why then, a-God's name, my lord," resumed she, " why does not our ministry try to persuade the brutes to return to their old trades. They have tried long enough to get them hanged ; but that will not do, though

the brutes themselves must be sensible they deserve it ; yet, depend upon it, they never will agree to that measure : but they may think it a very good compromise to be allowed quietly to return to the exercise of their ancient occupations. A great many of the emigrants, I know," continued she, " would be against this, even although the king's restoration depended on it. Nothing will satisfy them but having all the guilty executed : but the emigrants must be overruled in that point ; and the present rulers allowed quietly to resume their lastts, and their curling-irons, and their needles, for the sake of peace, since a better cannot be made of it.—Have you any objection to this plan, my lord?"

"None," replied my brother : "but it may be difficult to persuade those low fellows in the directory to agree to it. Low fellows are sometimes very obstinate."

"If they cannot be persuaded, my lord,"

said she, “ they should be bribed ;—that is a method that generally succeeds with low fellows as well as with high.”

The entrance of lady Amelia put an end to the dialogue.

Farewell !

J. MORDAUNT.

LETTER LXX.

The Same to the Same.

MY DEAR SOMMERS,

Rose-Mount.

LADY Amelia Melton is, undoubtedly, an elegant and beautiful woman: her person and manner are both improved since I last saw her. A slight blush suffused her fine countenance, when the eyes of the company turned upon her, as she entered the room: this was a fresh embellishment; for, naturally, her face is rather too pale. My brother glanced at me with an air of triumph—implying, you never saw so handsome a woman. Except the *incognita*, I do not know that I ever did. I have not yet been able, you will perceive, to shake that woman's figure from my imagination. I wish she had stopped a little longer at the cottage, that I might have discovered something in her face, or person, to have found fault with,—

but she was whisked away when I was in the height of admiration ; and, in the glance she threw from the chaise, there was an expression more pleasing than I ever beheld in the human countenance before ; but which I have had since repeated a thousand times to my imagination, sleeping or waking.

As for the usual paleness of lady Amelia's face, I believe it proceeds, in a great measure, from the aunt's prescriptions.

A little after the young lady entered, one of the company mentioned a new disease, to which cows are liable ; which gave lady Aspic occasion to remark, "that there was an astonishing affinity between the diseases of brutes and those of the human species ;"—and she was proceeding, when captain Vapour, struck with a very hackneyed allusion, which he seemed to consider as a bright thought, interrupted her by adding, "*particularly between men and horned cattle.*"

Many a man has injured his fortune by his wit. I did not imagine that Billy Vapour

would ever be of the number : and nothing can be a stronger proof of the difficulty of suppressing any idea which a man, however erroneously, conceives to be witty, than that captain Vapour could not retain this, though he was solicitous to keep the good opinion of lady Aspic, knew that she could not bear to be interrupted, and abhorred allusions of that nature.

Her brow was immediately contracted by additional wrinkles ; her breast began to swell with additional venom, which was ready to be poured on the captain, when a servant announced dinner. The duchess rose, and, by the most flattering attentions to her, restored good-humour.

My brother was seated between the duchess and lady Aspic ; I, between her grace and lady Anelia ; and I had some agreeable conversation with both ; which, however, was sometimes interrupted by hints from lady Aspic, on what dishes were most, and what least, salutary. I observed, with plea-

sure, that lady Amelia, though she received on her plate, yet hardly tasted, what her aunt recommended, and showed a partiality for what she condemned. But I was sorry to perceive, that she seemed somewhat infected with the aunt's fantasies concerning air and nerves — From all the contemptuous malignity that distinguishes the aunt's conversation, that of the niece is entirely free: indeed, had she not naturally been of an opposite disposition, the displeasing manner in which her aunt's ill-temper was continually bursting forth might have influenced the young lady to adopt a behaviour as different as possible from hers. So irresistible was her ladyship's propensity to say what was disobliging, that she not only attacked those who had given her any, even the least, provocation, but she could not always refrain from sarcasm against people who, so far from wishing to offend her, did every thing they thought most likely to gain

her good opinion. Several proofs of this she exhibited before we had done with dinner.

I should have mentioned, that, immediately before the duchess seated herself, she had desired the clergyman to say grace. He was at that instant complimenting me on the fancy of my waistcoat. Her grace's request came on him like a clap of thunder in the middle of serene weather—he had not the least suspicion of such a demand from a person of her rank. He saw that captain Vapour was ready to laugh ; and he blushed like a young maiden, to whom a very unbecoming proposal had been unexpectedly made. Recovering himself at last, however, in some degree, he mumbled a few words in a rapid and most irreverent style, and then tried to resume his usual pert air.

The duchess had observed all this ; and, as it struck me, was highly offended. She behaved to him afterwards with a degree of coldness, very different from the reception he

had received at his introduction ; but still with politeness.

In the course of conversation at table, captain Vapour expressed himself, with more decision than he had done before, against the measures of sending any part of the militia, or accepting the offer of any volunteer corps, to serve out of the kingdom, on any account whatever. Notwithstanding her having before spoken to the same purpose, lady Aspic could not let this opportunity slip of venting her displeasure against the poor captain :— “ Well,” said she, in a more distinct tone of voice than usual, “ nothing, in my opinion, can be more contemptible, than for any man, who pretends to be a soldier, to be deficient in the essential article of courage.”

“ Upon my word,” said Mr. Milliner, “ I am entirely of your ladyship’s opinion. Nothing, indeed, can, as your ladyship observes, be more contemptible.”

“ Unless it be,” resumed lady Aspic, in the same decisive and distinct tone of voice,

"a clergyman without the least appearance of religion."

Having pronounced this, she presented her snuff-box to Mr. Milliner, saying—"I perceive, sir, you take snuff—will you try a little of mine?"

Mr. Milliner, without betraying the same discomposure he had done when he was desired to say grace, took a pinch, and said "it was excellent."

"I was afraid," added she, "that you would have found it too pungent."

"Not in the least," replied he.

"Indeed," resumed her ladyship, "this snuff is very much in fashion."

"Is it?" said the clergyman: "I beg your ladyship will indulge me in another pinch."

The duchess rising, the ladies withdrew with her grace; and the men followed soon after,—all but captain Vapour and the clergyman, who, being informed that their chaise was at the gate, retired together.

When we joined the ladies, I overheard the duchess, in a jocose manner, accuse lady Aspic for having been too severe on her relations.—“ As for the captain,” replied she, “ your grace could not but observe that he had provoked me by his petulance.”

“ Perhaps so,” said the duchess; “ but that will not palliate what you said to the clergyman; for, though the young man seems to have the weakness to be out of countenance at performing the duties of a profession, which a wiser and more pious man would consider as an honour, yet I do think what your ladyship said to him was a little too severe.—Why, you might really as well have insinuated that he was an atheist.”

“ If I had,” said lady Aspic, “ he would not have minded it, nor any thing else, unless I had insinuated that he was a ‘ Quiz,’ which, I understand, is the fashionable term for a person ridiculously, that is, unfashionably, dressed.”

As all the time that lady Aspic can spare from the care of her own health, and calumniating her neighbours, is dedicated to cards, the duchess arranged a party at whist, in which neither lady Amelia nor I were included. Her grace and my brother were partners against lady Aspic and a gentleman who had dined with us. Lady Amelia having declined playing, I remained conversing with her during the whole evening, which I passed very agreeably.—This was not the case with the gentleman who was lady Aspic's partner, particularly during the two last rubbers. She murmured through her nose many severe reflections against him for holding bad cards.

He bore it with great patience; acknowledging the fault, and modestly hinting that it was involuntary.

At the end of the third rubber, lady Aspic, having lost all the three, expressed herself, while paying the money, with redoubled bit-

terness.—“ She could not conceive what was the meaning of his holding such very bad cards.”

The gentleman confessed, with every mark of contrition, “ that his cards had been very bad.”

“ Bad !” rejoined she ; “ they were detestable, sir !—I never saw any body hold such cards : I own I do not understand it.”

“ Why, madam,” said he, “ that my cards were bad was my misfortune as well as your ladyship’s.”

“ That is nothing to the purpose, sir,” rejoined she.

“ I really do not know what apology would satisfy you,” resumed the gentleman ; “ but I may safely assure your ladyship, upon my honour,” laying his hand on his breast, “ that I had all the inclination in the world to hold good cards.”

“ Sir,” replied she, with a look of dignity, and in the accent peculiar to herself, “ I would not, willingly, call any gentle-

man's honour into question ; but I cannot help remarking that you had good hands, and generally held two honours during the first rubber, when you were her grace's partner : it was not till you became mine that you had bad cards, and seldom a single honour among them. This, you will permit me to say, seems to be a little unaccountable."

The gentleman being at a loss how to understand or answer such an insinuation, the duchess interfered, saying, with a gay air, " However unaccountable it may seem, I think I can explain it on your ladyship's own principles. You have often told me that the countess of Deanport's notion, that everything at whist depends on seats, is quite erroneous. Your ladyship maintains that winning or losing depends on what you called *runs* ; and, that when any body is in a run of good luck at whist he often holds honours ; whereas, if he is in a run of bad luck, he seldom does. The gentleman's having held honours when

he was my partner, and not when he was yours, therefore, may have proceeded from my being at present in a run of good luck, which I own is the case, and your ladyship's being in a run of bad."

"That will account for it, unquestionably," replied lady Aspic ; "but I wish your grace had been so good as to have informed me a little sooner of your being in a lucky run."

"Why, truly," replied the duchess, "I only began to suspect it myself after I had won the second rubber ; and I was not absolutely certain until after I had won the third."

My brother and I were pressed by the duchess to stay all night : but he seldom sleeps out of his own bed ; and, as the weather is mild, we returned to Rose-Mount very late.

He was highly delighted with the pleasure I seemed to have taken in lady Amelia's company ; and I joined very sincerely in the praises he bestowed on her as we returned. He informed me that the duchess, who is her di-

stant relation, regretted that she continued to live so much with her aunt, and would be happy to have more of the society of the one, if it could be obtained without the oppressive taxation of the others.

But lady Amelia thinks herself under obligation to her aunt for the attention she paid her after her mother's death. That attention, undoubtedly, has been a real misfortune; but, in spite of this, as lady Amelia knows that it would afflict lady Aspic if they were to live separate, she is unwilling to propose it. And, though she probably wishes it, the duchess thinks she will not have the resolution to make any such proposition; and, of course, will continue to live with lady Aspic until her marriage. This, you will naturally imagine, cannot render her more averse to matrimony; and a woman of her beauty, birth, fortune, and accomplishments, must, of course, have had many suitors.

On this subject the conversation was pushed no farther; but I clearly believe that lady

Amelia is the person he wishes me united to. I do not dispute that the union would do me honour; but I question much whether it would render either of us happy. She has been bred up with infinite tenderness and delicacy. They say she is of great sensibility, and easily alarmed. This may be called amiable; but it is dreadfully troublesome. She made an observation about nerves, which I own *alarmed* me. But I hope this is merely a plan of my brother's, and that lady Amelia herself has no thought of ever being united to me, but would reject such a proposal with disdain, if it were made to her. I have so much goodwill to her, that, were she to consult me on the subject, I should most sincerely give her that advice.—Adieu !

J. MORDAUNT.

P. S. Just as I was going to seal this long letter, my brother came in, and told me, "that he had received a note from the duchess, in-

forming him, that lady Aspic had heard of a business that required both her own and her niece's presence in London; and that they had set out this very morning."—I perceived that this gave him some uneasiness, though he came to no farther explanation with me. As I intended returning to the capital in a day or two, this incident will, I imagine, make him agree to my leaving him with less difficulty than, perhaps, he would otherwise have done. I am impatient to see the marchioness, who has returned from Richmond. My next will probably be from London.—Farewell !

LETTER LXXI.

Mrs H. CLIFFORD to Mrs. SOMMERS.

MY DEAR JULIET.

London.

IN my last I informed you of my reconciliation with lady Deanport, and the more easy footing I was then on with both the mother and the son. All that is now over: at least I am inclined to think so.— You shall judge.

Her ladyship visited my aunt the very day after she had spoken so courteously to me at the embassador's. Her behaviour, in all respects, was calculated to convince me, more and more, that Mrs. Demure had misrepresented her. Two days after, she called again in the forenoon. She turned the discourse on poor Mrs. Denham. She said, “that having heard that her eldest son was destined for the army, lord Deanport had offered to make an application for an ensigncy in the Guards for him; that his lordship was on such a

footing with administration, and the commander in chief, that she had no doubt of his succeeding, and desired me to write to lady Diana on the subject; and, in case it was agreeable to the youth's mother, that the application would be directly made. You may imagine how much I was delighted with all this. Notwithstanding that I have usually been hurt by the obsequious behaviour of my aunt, both to lady Deanport and her son, yet I joined in the attentions she paid him when he came into her box at the opera, after this obliging conduct on the part of his mother. I now most sincerely wished that my aunt might be entirely mistaken in her notion of his lordship's passion for me, because, being sensible that I could not make him a suitable return, it gave me uneasiness to think I should ever be under the necessity of giving him any. I really felt so much good will towards him, that it must have been apparent in my whole looks and manner.

After the opera, he attended us to our car-

riage. One of his footmen told him, just as we were stepping in, that his own chariot was far behind, and could not get up to the door for some time. My aunt, observing that it rained a little, offered to set him down at his own house, which was not much out of our way. I did not entirely relish some of his behaviour in the coach, which could not be observed by my aunt; but which, I afterwards thought, must have been merely accidental,—so unwilling was I to construe any thing to his disadvantage which could bear a favourable meaning. Lady Deanport called the following morning; and, without coming out of her chariot, sent word that she waited for my aunt, who had just before informed me “that she expected her ladyship to carry her to see a collection of birds, at no great distance from town, and that she should not return until about the usual time of dressing for dinner.”

After she was gone, I took up a pamphlet, which had been brought that very morning.

When I tell you that it pleased me highly, you will readily believe that it was not of the nature of those usually sent to my uncle : it had no reference to that everlasting source of calumny and dissension, the politics of the day. Much that has been written on that subject might be called, *The Pains of Recollection*. The performance which pleased me so much is entitled, *The Pleasures of Memory*. I have sent it to you by the stage, with an earnest prayer, my dearest Juliet, that your life may continue to be supplied with incidents of the most pleasing remembrance.

As I finished the perusal, lord Deanport was shown into the room. Though I was a little surprised at his lordship's entrance, the pleasure I had received from the poem must have been predominant in my countenance, and may have been imputed by him to my satisfaction at his appearance : indeed, as soon as I recollect ed what he had undertaken in favour of young Denham, he judged in some measure right.

He had not sat long, before he began to compliment me on my looks, &c. &c. &c.

I bowed, and, without taking farther notice of the common-place praise, started another subject. He did not answer my lead, but resumed the stale strain.

“ Why, you told me all this last night, my lord,” said I. “ Are you surprised that I look as well in the morning as I did in the evening ? ”

To this he replied, at first, with the smile which is his usual resource when he has no other answer ready. And, after recollection, he added, with an obsequious gesture, and in a tone which appeared to me rather ridiculous, though certainly intended to be very captivating, “ That he thought me charming at all times ; that ”——But I need not repeat what he said ; you have had it all addressed to yourself, my dear, twenty times, by twenty different men.

“ Pray, my lord,” said I, interrupting him, “ did you never feel remorse, for try-

ing to render the brains of women more giddy than they naturally are, by flattery?"

"I know one woman," said he, bowing very obsequiously, "to whose merits I cannot do even justice."

"Leave the woman then," replied I, laughing, "to do justice to herself; she is probably fully apprised of all the merit that really belongs to her. Her faults, indeed, may escape her discernment; but, believe me, my lord, it is a thousand to one that the most minute of her good qualities will not."

I remember I spoke this in a very gay manner. How it struck the man I know not; but, with a vivacity unusual to him, he swore I was irresistible, seized my hand, and, before I could disengage it, proceeded to other liberties.

Forcing myself from him, I rung the bell twice, very briskly. He stood disconcerted. When the servant entered, I pronounced, with as much coolness as I could assume,
"*his lordship's carriage.*"

" *I walked* hither," said he, with a disturbed voice.

I nodded to the footman to retire ; which, when he had done, I replied,—“ Your lordship may return in the same manner.”

He began an apology ; but, before he had finished, I left the room.

When my aunt returned, I made no mention to her of what had happened ; nor shall I to any other person.—I hope we shall see no more of his lordship ; and I shall, with patience and resignation, bear being pitied by my aunt and others, as one of those unfortunate nymphs, who, after having entertained ambitious hopes, have been forsaken by high-born faithless swains. The lamentations of my aunt will be sincere : those of some other of my female friends, who, I could easily perceive, saw his lordship's attentions to me with envy, will be uttered with the accent of sorrow, and the sensation of joy.

Yet, people are so dexterous at finding excuses for their own conduct, and so ready to

censure that of others, that, I dare say, his lordship thinks I behaved like a coquette at the beginning of this business, and like a prude at the conclusion. I regard not what he and many others may think ; but, as I dislike both these characters, it is of importance to me that my friend, and only confidant in this transaction, should be satisfied that I was actuated by the spirit of neither. You cannot but have observed, my dear, that when I relaxed a little in appearance from the indifference I really felt for this lord, on my first getting acquainted with him, it was not from a spirit of coquetry, but merely to vex lady Deanport, who, I perceived, was dreadfully out of humour at her son's attentions to me, and I had no other way of retaliating on her for the malicious style in which she spoke of lady Diana. When I afterwards had reason to believe that I had been misinformed with regard to her, and knew his intentions regarding young Denham, my behaviour was still less prompted by coquetry, but entire-

ly by genuine good-will, as it would have been towards any man of his rank, for whom I had no other sentiment.

As for the imputation of prudery, that gives me still less concern; for, although his lordship's behaviour in the coach was equivocal, and the liberties he attempted next day of no very heinous nature, yet I could not help considering the second as an explanation of the first. Perhaps in this I may be mistaken; but the very circumstance of his rank in life, which had increased my sense of obligation for his friendly conduct regarding Mrs. Denham's family, and which softened my behaviour to him, had a contrary effect when he attempted liberties which I should have repelled in any man, but which ought to be more guarded against from a man of rank than another,—and which excite greater indignation, because the idea he himself entertains of his high birth may be the source of his presumption.

I should not like to be thought over-nice and scrupulous by any *woman* of sense and virtue (for men are no proper judges) : but a becoming pride, independent of any superior consideration, I am convinced, will justify my treating this noble lord as I did.

I should be as well pleased, however, to hear nothing more on this subject. It is not likely that his lordship should ever mention it. You write sometimes to lady Diana : I beg, my dear, that you will give no hint to her.—Whether lord Deanport will ever wish to see me more, I know not ; but I am determined to avoid him as much as I decently can. It will be difficult to account for this to my aunt, without letting her know the whole, which I am not inclined to do. This difficulty I must encounter directly, for I hear her coming. Adieu !

H. CLIFFORD.

LETTER LXXII.

JAMES GRINDILL, *Esq. to the Countess of
DEANPORT.*

MY DEAR LADY DEANPORT, —shire, Wales.

WHY should I expatiate on the cruel disappointment I have met with, when I can give you a complete idea of it in three words.—The man is dead!—his whole fortune is left to another, with the exception of a few legacies to poor relations, and one hundred pounds to me, to purchase a mourning ring.—Curse the legacy and the legator!—Did you ever hear of any thing so perfidious?—I never had the least suspicion of the fellow whom he has appointed his heir.—How could I?” He is but a very distant relation, of the name of Evans, a young artist, as poor as Job—said to have genius: that alone would have prevented me from suspecting him?—Whoever knew fortune so very bountiful to genius?—

As it is now apparent that he is one of her favourites, he will henceforth be ranked among the dunces.

This young fellow had been sent abroad by the old hypocrite, who remitted him small sums, to enable him to prosecute his studies as a painter. I met him when he was last at Dresden ; and, as I knew that he wrote sometimes to Phillips, I thought it prudent to show the fellow every civility in my power. I recommended him to Mr. Mordaunt, and to several English gentlemen, who bought pictures of him.—He seemed wonderfully grateful, and be d—d to him ! Every body is grateful, as your ladyship knows, while they are receiving favours : ingratitude never begins till the benefactor loses the power or inclination of granting more. One person, who had purchased several of his pictures, carried them to England, and showed them to Phillips, speaking, at the same time, very highly of the lad's private character—“ that he would be an honour to his family,” &c.

This gave the old dotard the first idea of making him his heir.—The will was made privately—the attorney and witnesses were sworn to secrecy.—Never was an innocent, unsuspecting man, so completely duped as I have been. It is enough to drive one mad, to think on the cursed fatality by which I contributed to my own misfortune. If I had not recommended this young puppy to the officious blockhead who carried his works to Phillips, and spoke of him as one who would do honour to his family, the old rascal would never have dreamt of leaving him more than two or three hundred pounds ;—even that would have been too much for such a beggarly dog.—Honour to the family !—D—n him, he is—What ?—a painter,—a fellow employed, from morning to night, in spreading colours on canvas—in endeavouring to impose on mankind, by giving beauty to features intended to express deformity ; by putting sense into countenances which honest nature intended for fools ; and very often re-

presenting actions, for which those who performed them deserved to be hanged. I have heard of one of them (who is called a man of great genius too), who is employed in painting a series of pictures, in which Satan himself plays a principal roll.—And this they call one of the fine arts.—A very fine art, truly ; but, fine or coarse, is nothing to the purpose : —Phillips had no taste for it, in any of its branches : he never paid a farthing for a picture in his life, except once, to an itinerant limner, whom he accidentally met at the inn at Landilo.—As the story will give your ladyship some idea of what a brute this kinsman of mine was, it is worth recounting.

The limner, being in distress for money, offered to paint Phillips's portrait, or that of any of his friends, for a moderate sum. Phillips took him home in his carriage, saying—“ That, as for his own face, it was not worth painting ; but that he should like to have the portrait of a worthy friend of his, who, he feared, was in a declining way.”—

Who do you think this friend was? Why, an old Welch poney, who had carried him up and down the mountains for above a dozen years; and who, as he asserted, had rendered him more essential services than any friend he had. The portrait of the horse was painted accordingly: it was thought so like, that Phillips paid the artist double the sum he had bargained for, hung it up in his parlour, and never looked at it, after the death of the original, without a sigh, and a short panegyric on his excellent qualities.—Did your ladyship ever hear of any thing so inconsistent? That the same man, who could behave with such generosity to a vagrant dauber, and showed so much regard for the memory of an old horse, should be capable of the blackest ingratitude to his nearest male relation—one who had hurried from the continent on the first rumour of his danger—who had attended him, with much assiduity, during a tedious illness—who, on his account, had been agi-

tated between hope and fear, for months together—and, after all, to be thus treated ! I hope, from the bottom of my soul, that the old villain is now suffering, in the other world, for all his——. No, no, I will not carry my resentment that length. I have strong reasons for hoping there is no such place : it is best, on the whole, that he should remain without feeling.—Hang him ! he never had either feeling or natural affection, otherwise he would not have blasted all my expectations in this manner. So far from having any sympathy with me, on recollection, and putting circumstances together, I begin to think that he enjoyed my present disappointment by anticipation. I now perfectly remember, that several times, when I was displaying great uneasiness on account of his sufferings, or was more than commonly assiduous in offering him my assistance, a kind of contemptuous, or sarcastic smile, appeared in his countenance.—Is it possible that the old

fox really penetrated through all my disguises, and saw the true state of my mind? On my conscience, I half suspect it.

To maintain the appearance of genuine sorrow, when the heart overflows with joy, is a very difficult attempt. We see it tried, every day, by heirs, widows, and others, without imposing on any mortal. I do not believe it was ever executed in a more exquisite manner than by your ladyship, after my lord's death. I have reason to believe that my attempts have been less successful.— I remember, one time in particular, a little before Phillips died, I stood at his bed-side, sighing very boisterously, and making every effort to muster affliction or despair (if possible) into my countenance: I shall never forget the expressive ironical glance he threw on me. It made a transient impression at the moment ;—it makes a *deeper* on recollection. I believe, in my conscience, that the unrelenting old villain meant it to say—“ Sigh and sob as you please, cousin Grindill—you

do not deceive me ; and, with all your hypocritery, you will be confoundedly bit."

But, if that glance had meant as much as Burleigh's shake of the head meant in the play of *The Critic*, I deserve it all, for recommending that cursed little prig, at Dresden, to the notice of any of my acquaintance.— Oh ! that stings deep,

Yet I cannot accuse myself of having been often guilty of teasing my friends, in favour of needy vagabonds, neither. What a cruel aggravation ! that I should have deviated from my usual prudence in this single instance, and thereby contributed to *his* happiness who is the ruin of mine !—After all, this may not, perhaps, tend to his happiness at the long run : there is some comfort in that thought. Had Phillips left him only a moderate legacy, he would have persevered in the practice of an art in which he took much delight, and in which I was assured (in spite of what I said before) he was daily improving : he might gradually have acquired for

tune and high reputation, and passed his life more agreeably than he is likely to do after this windfall, which, it is a thousand to one, will relax his efforts, blast his hopes of improvement as a painter, sink him into indolence, and overwhelm him with *ennui*. This might have occurred to the old scoundrel on his death-bed. He might have reflected, that by such an unjust will he would render me miserable, without making this distant cousin of his happy.

Yet I question whether even that consideration would have had any weight with a man so completely selfish and devoid of principle :—but, of one thing I am certain ; that, by this diabolical will, he has made me suffer as much vexation in reality, as I had, in appearance, on account of his illness. I am sure I need suffer no other. But though I may say, with Hamlet, “*Man delights not me !*” I cannot add, *nor woman neither* ; for I still have the pleasure of reflecting on the favour with which your ladyship honours me, on every reverse of fortune.

I could not delay a moment in acquainting you with what has happened ; and your ladyship will not be surprised that my letter is written in an incoherent style. Prompted by a variety of painful feelings, I must remain in this cursed country for some time longer ; but I shall have the honour of waiting on you in London very soon.

I remain,
Your ladyship's most faithful
and most afflicted humble servant,

J. GRINDILL.

P. S. This misfortune has come so unexpectedly, that I have nothing provided ; and never in my life stood in more need of a supply.

LETTER LXXIII.

Miss Horatia Clifford to Mrs. Sommers.

London.

You are right, my dear—this business did not end where I expected. I really was in hopes that his lordship's pride would have been so much wounded by the issue of our last interview, that he would never have deigned to attempt to renew it.—In this hope I have been disappointed. I received a letter from him of apology for his conduct, imputing it to the fervor of his passion, admiration, &c. which made him forget himself for a moment ; and this is followed by a thousand protestations of respect, affection—I don't know what ; and concludes with a request to be allowed to wait on me the same day, or the following, *on a business on which the happiness of his whole life, as he very formally protests, depends.*

This letter vexed me heartily. I forefaw that it would be the forerunner of disputes with my aunt, which I have always endeavoured very carefully to avoid. Being told that the servant who had brought the letter waited for an answer, I immediately wrote one to the following effect:—"That I should think no more of the affair which he seemed so anxious about, and hoped that he would give himself as little concern.—I thanked him for the polite expressions in his letter; but as I was fully convinced that I had not, and never could have, a connection with any thing on which the happiness of his lordship's life depended, I desired to be excused from the interview he requested, and also from the honour of receiving any more letters from him."

A few days after, I was a good deal surprised to understand, on my return from an airing with my uncle, that lord Deanport had called and passed a full hour with my aunt. I saw by her countenance that she was full of

what she considered to be of great importance, and waited with impatience for an opportunity of communicating it to me. My uncle asked two or three times, during dinner, if any thing particular had happened.— He received a note, which obliged him to go out earlier than usual.

My aunt then informed me that lord Deanport had been with her, and had expressed great uneasiness, on account of a coldness which had taken place, on my part, towards him ; that he had spoken of me in the highest terms of admiration, and had begged of her to use her influence with me, that he might be allowed to pay his court to me as formerly. She then commented to me on the folly of behaving with coldness to a suitor of his importance : “ for,” added she, “ although he did not speak of marriage in direct terms, it is evident that he intends it, and probably will make the proposal the very first time you give him an opportunity.”

As I perceived that he had not mentioned to my aunt the immediate origin of the coldness he complained of, I also thought it best not to enter into any detail on that subject. I contented myself with expressing much concern for not being able to meet the wishes of so near and so affectionate a relation ; but that, in an affair of this personal nature, I must be allowed to be directed by my own feelings.

As I could guess pretty nearly what she would have urged, and as I wished to avoid altercation, I pronounced this in a more decided manner than I ever spoke to my aunt before. The consequence was what I expected—She parted from me without deigning to say another word.

Next forenoon I happened to be amusing myself, looking at a collection of prints in a small room adjoining to the library, when my aunt entered it with my uncle, who was just returned from his ride. She immediately

began to state to him what had passed between lady Deanport and her the preceding day.—The door was not quite shut—I heard distinctly what was said.—She certainly thought I was in my own apartment—I believe I ought to have withdrawn: but as there was no other way of quitting the room, than by passing through the library, I had not the courage to move: and this enables me to give you the following dialogue.—After complaining of my *unaccountable obstinacy* in refusing to hearken to the addresses of lord Deanport, my aunt begged of her husband to use his influence with me, that I might not a second time allow a most advantageous match to escape from me; and concluded by asking, “when he, or any of my friends, could expect that I should have such another offer?”

Mr. Darnley. That is a question, my dear, which, I confess, I cannot answer.

Mrs. Darnley. The earl of Deanport is young, handsome, rich, of high rank, and

likely to obtain some distinguished office in the household.

Mr. D. Perhaps you mean in the state or army, my dear ?

Mrs. D. By no means, my dear. The one is troublesome, and the other dangerous, especially at the present times. An office in the household is equally honourable, and by much the safest. And, besides, my lord's lady may have an office in it as well as his lordship, which she could not have in the state or army.

Mr. D. Have you represented all this to Horatia ?

Mrs. D. That I have,—again, and again, and again.

Mr. D. Since so many alluring circumstances, uniting in one man, are not able to bias her in his favour, do you not imagine, my dear, that this forms a strong presumption of her having a very valid reason for refusing him ?

Mrs. D. No, Mr. Darnley, she can have

no reason for refusing such a man as lord Deanport, except her having taken a fancy for some other.

Mr. D. Well, my dear, if that should be the case, do you not think it a pretty valid reason?

Mrs. D. Not at all: for that must be mere caprice, and will soon wear off.

Mr. D. Let us, at least, wait, my dear, till it *does* wear off.

Mrs. D. It will, then, be *too late*.

Mr. D. Of that, my dear, we cannot be sure; but of this we are absolutely certain—that to begin to persuade a woman to marry one man, before her love (or caprice, if you please) for another is worn off, would be beginning too soon.

Mrs. D. I have known many instances of women who have become fond of their husbands after marriage, though they were not in love with them before. People's tempers conform and accommodate to each other

on near acquaintance, and when they have a common interest.

Mr. D. I have known, at least, as many, my dear, of women, who, being indifferent about their husbands before marriage, came to detest them after it, precisely because they became better acquainted with them. I shall only instance your relation, poor Charlotte, who, in spite of her dislike of the man, was persuaded to marry sir Joseph Waddel. She was told that she would like him better and better by degrees, that she would enjoy great affluence, and, of course, live very comfortably. Instead of better and better, however, the poor woman (you told me yourself) likes him worse and worse, lives very *uncomfortably*, and, of course, has little or no enjoyment in her affluence.

Mrs. D. There is a difference between sir Joseph Waddel and a handsome young man.

Mr. D. There is so. Yet a woman who

dislikes them both, in my humble opinion, should marry neither.

Mrs. D. Besides being young and handsome, lord Deanport is a peer.

Mr. D. You seem to have a great partiality for peers.

Mrs. D. Depend upon it, all woman-kind have.

Mr. D. I have sometimes thought that men sacrificed rather too much to obtain that rank—I can be no longer of that opinion; but now, for the first time in my life, I regret very much that I am not a peer.

[My aunt was certainly a good deal affected by this last speech of my uncle.—I distinguished the tone of tenderness and emotion in her voice, while she said]

Mrs. D. You do me great injustice, if you are not persuaded that there is one commoner whom I prefer to the whole house of peers.

Mr. D. Since that is the case, my dear,

I am again reconciled to my rank in life, and have no longer a wish for a peerage.

Mrs. D. After all, my good friend, don't you think the world will be greatly surprised if you neglect to do every thing in your power to prevail on your niece to accept of so advantageous an offer.

Mr. D. I have made it a rule through life, my dear, to consider whether a measure is right or wrong in itself, and to act accordingly, without considering in the least whether the world would be surprised or not. If Horatia does not like the man, which there is great reason to believe is the case, it would be wrong in us to persuade the girl to marry him, merely to prevent the world from being surprised.

Mrs. D. Not merely for that, though the opinion of the world ought to have some weight, but also because the man in question is elegant, accomplished, and—and—

Mr. D. And a lord.

Mrs. D. Very well—I do acknowledge that in my opinion, that very circumstance ought to have considerable weight.

Mr. D. I grant it, my dear: but you must admit also, that although all women have a taste for lords, yet some lords are not to every woman's taste. Now the particular lord in question, with all his elegance, happens not to be to the taste of your niece, which, in my opinion, over-balances the advantages which you think he possesses. Let me tell you, my dear, that a young woman is placed in a very dangerous situation who is married to a man she does not like.

Mrs. D. I feel no uneasiness on that score. Horatia has had too good an education, and is of too virtuous principles, ever to deviate from the fidelity she will owe to her husband.

Mr. D. I have a very high opinion of Horatia, and the utmost affection for her; on which account I am the more averse from having any hand in persuading her to become

the wife of a man she does not love.—I wish to keep those I value out of danger.

Mrs. D. Good Heavens ! Mr. Darnley, what strange fancies you have. Can you imagine that a woman, well educated, who has always been in good company, who is married to a man of high rank—

Mr. D. Rank makes no odds : there are as many cuckolds in the House of Peers as in the Court of Aldermen.

Mrs. D. Well, Mr. Darnley, you really astonish me. I never heard you speak such language. Have you such an opinion of Horatia Clifford as to think that—

Mr. D. You mistake me, my dear ; I mean no insinuation against Horatia : I love her as much as I could were she my daughter. There is no young woman on earth of whom I have a higher esteem ;—but, I repeat it, I would not place any person I love, young or old, man or woman, in dangerous situations, if I could avoid it : and, a young woman who is married to a man she dislikes,

is, in my opinion, in a very dangerous situation. But, if you will not admit it to be dangerous, you cannot deny it that it is disagreeable, which is sufficient to deter her friends from pressing her into it. Besides, my dear, as women do not enjoy all the privileges which men do, I am for leaving them in the full possession of those they have.

Mrs. D. I do not understand to what you allude.

Mr. D. Why, my dear, as the fair sex are not allowed to pay their addresses to those they like, I am clear for supporting them in the privilege of rejecting the addresses of those they do not like, whether peer or commoner.

Mrs. D. As Horatia has never hinted a prepossession in favour of another man, her objection to lord Deanport must proceed from her having heard something against his temper or disposition. Do you not think, then, it would be worth while to make some inquiry on this head?—and, in case of its being found that such rumours are ground-

less, you will then, perhaps, judge proper to convince my niece of her error.

Mr. D. If the case were precisely the reverse, my dear ;—if Horatia, on account of his rank and handsome person, were inclined to marry a man of a bad character or temper ; I should think it my duty to bring proofs of this to her, that she might alter her intention : but, in the present case, notwithstanding her having no prepossession in favour of another, she seems to be averse from marrying this man. It is true that there are women, who, from motives of interest or ambition, do marry men for whom they have a contempt or aversion ; but Horatia does not possess that kind of philosophy. And she has, on so many occasions, manifested so great a desire to oblige me, that I cannot bear to make a request which she may have an invincible repugnance against complying with, and yet have great pain in refusing —I feel much uneasiness at this moment, my dear, in not agreeing to what you have proposed with

so much earnestness:—why should I give equal, or, perhaps, greater uneasiness, to one who, I know, has the utmost inclination to oblige me?

[There was no immediate answer made to this. After a short pause, my aunt said]

Mrs. D. My dear, I cannot answer what you have said—I believe I have done wrong in pressing Horatia—I ought not to reason with you—I am a weak reasoner—I wonder you could think of marrying a woman who can argue so ill.

Mr. D. It was not on account of your arguing talents that I married you, my dear, but for a thousand more amiable qualities, by which you have rendered me a very happy husband. One of them is, that you acknowledge a mistake as soon as you are made sensible of it, even though it be in the heat of the dispute, which is a degree of candour that very few great disputers are capable of.

[Here a footman entered, and having pronounced the name of general Randal, they

both left the library with that eagerness which they always have to see that gentleman, and I slipped to my own apartment, extremely pleased not to be known to have overheard so singular a conversation.

My aunt entered my room some time after—“ Your uncle has convinced me, my dear,” said she, holding forth her hand, “ that I was wrong to trouble you in the manner I did about lord Deanport. I know you are angry—Pray let us be friends.”

I need not inform you, Juliet, what return I made to so affectionate an address—it quite overpowered me. I do not know that I could have refused her any thing.—I am glad she did not at that moment renew her request respecting lord Deanport.—I will not describe the scene which passed between us, farther than just to mention one expression of my aunt.—“ You have been peculiarly fortunate, my dear Horatia,” said she, “ in your nearest relations. Your father was a man of acknowledged honour and admirable good sense;

your mother was a saint ; and to your poor aunt you are obliged for being niece to the most just and most benevolent man in England."

I could not love my aunt more than I did ; but I certainly have a higher esteem for her than ever.

I knew, my dear Juliet, that this detail would give you pleasure : I stayed, therefore, from the opera, that I might have the pleasure of writing it.

Yours ever,

H. CLIFFORD.

LETTER LXXIV.

LADY DIANA FRANKLIN *to Miss H. Clifford.*

MY DEAR HORATIA.

Plimton.

I HAVE had hints in various letters from London, respecting the attentions which have been of late paid to you by the earl of Deanport; but, as you never mentioned that nobleman in your own letters, I took it for granted that my correspondents had mistaken the usual politeness of a man of high birth for extraordinary courtesies; therefore, in my letters to you, I took no more notice of the hints than, in yours to me, you did of the attentions. I should, probably, have continued the same conduct, had I not received a letter from your uncle by the last post, in which he tells me, that, though at one time you seemed rather pleased with the preference which the earl gave you, which was also countenanced by the countess his mother, you have since de-

clared to your aunt, “ that you were determined to discourage his addresses, and even to avoid giving him any opportunity of making them.”—Do not imagine, my dear, that I mean to impute blame to you for not consulting your relations or friends respecting your acceptance of a man whom you felt yourself determined to reject, in case he should make you a proposal of marriage. I think it rather conformable to your general conduct, that you waved informing them you had an admirer of that rank, since you felt no inclination to favour his addresses. Many young ladies, even if they had come to the same resolution, would still have thought they derived importance from having it known they refused such an offer.

As this young nobleman has been represented to me, however, as remarkably polite, handsome, accomplished, and free from some of the excesses of which the young men of the age are accused ; and, as at one period, you received his attentions in a favourable

manner ; I confess I should like to know (provided you feel no reluctance against giving me the information), what determined you to change your behaviour, and take such a decided resolution against him.

I have tried to account for this by various conjectures ; and, particularly by one, which nothing but the strongest proofs of attachment and affection to me, which you have on different occasions evinced, joined to the indignation you feel against all whom you have reason to believe are ill-disposed towards me, could have raised in my mind. It is, that the coldness which has long existed between lady Deanport and me may have had weight in determining you on this occasion. If there is any foundation for this conjecture, I beg that every thing of that nature may be thrown out of the scale ; for, whatever prejudices against me may have arisen on her ladyship's part, they would, in all probability, be effaced in case the connection in question should take place ; and, even although no great intimacy

should ever exist between her and me, I should still feel a very sensible satisfaction in your being advantageously married.

Notwithstanding what you tell me of the agreeable situation of the marchioness at Richmond, I fear she will think it strange that I have been so long without waiting on her. On other accounts my absence from town at present is vexatious; but I plainly perceive that my leaving Mrs. Denham at present would afflict her more than her weak state of mind and body could bear.—I must not propose it till she gains a little more strength: she has no other friend.—Adieu! my dear Horatia.

Pray give me a little light respecting lord D.

LETTER LXXV.

*Miss HORATIA CLIFFORD to Lady DIANA
FRANKLIN.*

MY DEAR LADY DIANA.

London.

HAVING sometimes heard people turned into ridicule for asking their friends' advice, whether they should accept or reject those to whom they were already married, or at least fully determined to marry, I thought it would be equally ridiculous to consult mine respecting the addresses of a man whom, in case of his ever making the proposal to me, I was fully resolved to refuse.

I am happy to find that you do not disapprove of this. But you wish to know my objections to a man of high rank, who has been represented to you as handsome, polite, and accomplished.—With regard to the first, it would be affectation to pretend to look on it as an article of no weight; but I may say,

with truth, that when I perceive it has a great deal with the man himself, it has very little with me.

As for the second, I do consider it as essential to the character of a gentleman; and I know that lord Deanport is spoken of, by some people, as remarkably polite. Without troubling you with my precise idea of that term, I shall only say, that I dislike his lordship's kind of politeness. He performs the common civilities of society as if they were, in him, acts of condescension. His air, his gesture, his stately, yet obsequious bows, all betray a notion of his own superiority.

The great use of politeness, as my dear and ever lamented father explained it to me, is to correct the partiality, and check the rapacity, of self-love. He compared politeness to a mask with the features of benevolence, by which men try to cover the deformity of selfishness. Some wear this mask so awkwardly, that they continually show part of the ugly features behind it; others let it fall from their

face entirely, by too profound and too frequent bendings. This accident has frequently happened in my presence to the noble lord in question. He who, in the midst of the homage he pays to the company, plainly discovers that he thinks himself superior to them all, certainly defeats the purpose of politeness. Such a man is like one who, in the very act of obsequiously bowing to another, is all the while admiring his own attitudes, in a mirror placed behind the person he pretends to be treating so courteously.

I have often beheld lord Deanport acting this ridiculous part, and, all the time, he seemed convinced that he was admired by the spectators as much as he admired himself.

I tried to discover on what his own admiration could be founded ; for, after all, a man must, in spite of the delusions of vanity, know something of himself. I could find out nothing on which he could possible rest it, unless it were his figure and rank : in every

attainment that depends on genius and exertion he must be sensible of deficiency. This consciousness would have been advantageous if it had prompted him to acquire what he felt the want of. It has had no such effect on this noble lord : he seems only solicitous to conceal the deficiencies ; and can hear with complacency, instead of blushes, praise for imputed accomplishments ; than which I know no stronger proof of a mean mind. Pride on account of qualities we do not possess, or actions we never performed, is pride which, according to Pope's expression, "licks the dust." I acknowledge, at the same time, that pride, on account of high birth, is natural to man ; and, when accompanied, as it often is, with a desire of imitating the example of illustrious ancestors, it is, in a great measure, justifiable. But, to be inflated with pride on account of being descended from those to whose characters our own has no resemblance, and whose example we never attempt

to follow, is, in my opinion, equally absurd and ridiculous.

From what I have had opportunities of observing in life, I am led to think, that persons born of high rank are in general more unassuming, and possessed of greater ease of manner, than those who are raised to the same rank by marriage, or otherwise. If what I have heard of the late lord Deanport be true, his lordship and his lady were instances of the truth of this remark ; for he has been described to me as a man of very elegant manners. It is to be regretted, indeed, that the politeness and elegance of manner, which generally belongs to people of birth, is not always accompanied with benevolence. It gave me pain, in a company where I was lately, to hear it asserted, that the late lord Deanport was, with all his politeness, devoid of that virtue ; and that every appearance of it in his conduct proceeded from ostentation and vanity.

To return to your letter,—you have been informed, that at one time I behaved to lord Deanport in a manner that made people imagine that his addressees were agreeable to me ; and you wish to know my reasons for the alteration that afterwards took place in my conduct.—I own I intended to have concealed this from you ; but the inclination you express to be acquainted with the whole is more than sufficient to make me overcome the reluctance I had to trouble you with such a communication.

N. B. The rest of this letter consists of an account of miss Clifford's first acquaintance with lord Deanport, the rude manner in which lady Deanport had behaved to her, the manner in which she herself had retaliated, the alteration that took place in her ladyship's conduct ; and concludes with an

account of lord Deanport's behaviour at Mr. Darnley's: but as this narrative is, in substance, the same with what is contained in the letters addressed to Mrs. Sommers, it is here omitted.

LETTER LXXVI.

*Lady DIANA FRANKLIN to Miss HORATIA
CLIFFORD.*

MY DEAR HORATIA,

I HAVE considered, very attentively, the account you give of your adventure with the noble lord, and every other part of your last letter : the whole is written with that energy and sprightliness which belong to your character. The proofs it contains of that generous and warm friendship, which has long been a source of happiness to me, affected me greatly ; yet I must acknowledge that some pain was mingled with the pleasure I felt in the perusal, from the idea that your sensibility to whatever concerns me has led you a little out of the direct line of propriety, which you usually pursue. I will not allow your warm affection for myself, my dearest girl, however pleasing to my heart, to prevent me from

communicating to you my real sentiments, when I find the least thing censurable in any part of your conduct.

Though you do not say it, yet I am quite certain that the manner in which you have heard that lady Deanport expressed herself, regarding me, provoked you more than her insolence to yourself; yet your own observation might have convinced you that such intemperate expressions are more hurtful to the people who use them than to those they mean to injure, and are best answered by silent contempt.

I will not take upon me to decide whether your remark on the manners of people *born* to high rank, compared to those of persons *raised* to it, be well founded or not; but I can assure you that the construction you heard put on the late earl of Deanport's conduct is equally uncharitable and unjust. I had the honour of his acquaintance; and I always thought him a man of real politeness and benevolence. Nothing can display a more ma-

licious turn of mind than a disposition to put bad constructions on actions which naturally would bear good ones. When a person takes trouble, and puts himself to expense, not in giving sumptuous entertainments to the great and powerful, but in relieving the wants, and preparing some comforts to the poorest and most wretched class of our fellow-creatures, how ungenerous is it to assert, or insinuate, that this proceeds from any unbecoming motive!—yet I have heard the annual entertainment provided at Portman-square, for the poor chimney-sweepers of the capital, imputed to vanity and ostentation. The imputation gave me a very unfavourable impression of the person who made it, without, in the smallest degree, diminishing my esteem for the institutor, whose enlightened mind may exult in the reflection that her benevolent festival diffuses more enjoyment than all the luxurious entertainments that are wasted, on fated wealth, from the beginning of the year to the end.

In these sentiments, my dear Horatia, I am persuaded you join with me: but I fear we differ a little in our notions of the manner in which you resented lady Deanport's rudeness. Instead of despising a behaviour which dishonoured her, not you, perceiving that she was alarmed at her son's attentions to you, although you had received them before with coldness, you now seemed to relish them, and assumed an air of complaisance to him, merely to vex and tease her, without regarding the construction he would put on an alteration in your behaviour, so flattering to him. I greatly suspect, that if any improper sentiment, respecting you, ever suggested itself to the mind of lord Deanport, it was at this time; and that he never would have dared to have behaved to you as he did, when he found you alone at your uncle's, if the sudden alteration in your manner had not encouraged him.

How can his conduct be otherwise accounted for?—How came he to change his

behaviour to you, immediately after you changed yours to him?—He then ventured on freedoms he had never risked before. Why did he not make a proposal of marriage when he found you alone?—he never could expect a more favourable opportunity. Instead of this, he began to take unbecoming liberties. It is clear, my dear Horatia, that the man put a libertine construction on the alteration of your behaviour to him. This alteration consisted not only in its being expressive of more kindness than formerly, but also of more than you really felt. His subsequent conduct is one proof, among ten thousand, of the construction which men put on a coquettish behaviour in women. This is not unworthy of your serious attention, my lovely young friend. Pray observe:—The same man, who had always treated you with the most respectful politeness, takes freedoms which shock you, the moment that something of coquetry intermingles with your behaviour to him; and, as soon as you re-assume your

natural character, and the dignity of a virtuous woman, he is overawed, disconcerted, and, in the humblest tone, begs forgiveness.

Though I am not at all uneasy at being called an old maid, I should be sorry to be thought a prude ; particularly if great austerity be implied in the word : yet I would much rather be a prude than a coquette.

It will be said, that a coquette may be a virtuous woman ;—she only amuses herself by attracting the attention of men, and deceiving them with false hopes. I am not now speaking of that playful and thoughtless coquetry which has no object beyond drawing a little admiration ; of that species of coquetry nothing need be said, but that it is sometimes a dangerous game, and that the object it aims at may be better attained by other means. But of the other kind of coquetry, I own, my opinion is very different.

Deceiving men with false hopes !—Hopes of what nature ?—What do you think of this, my dear, as an occupation for a virtuous wo-

man? For my own part, so little of a prude am I, that I do not think *that* a woman of the town is a vast deal more reprehensible.

I am sensible, my dear Horatia, that you despise real coquetry. The alteration of your behaviour to the young lord flowed from a different source: but, though different, it was not perfectly pure. You wished to punish the insolence of lady Deanport, and the childish impertinence of the two other women, by making them believe that you had some partiality for the noble lord, and that you intended to accomplish what they dreaded. This, in my opinion; was not only improper; but superfluous: it would have been better to have overlooked the malevolence of all the three. Envy and malevolence contain their own punishment; for, while those women seemed so merry, at your expense, they were, in reality, feeling more pain than they gave. Besides, my dear, you ought to have recollect^d that you were not only deceiving

them, but also lord Deanport, who, at that period, had given you no cause of offence.

However displeased lady Deanport may have been with her son's attentions to you, it appears that she is of a different way of thinking now. This, I confess, I do not perfectly understand : but, since you have ranked his lordship among the polite gentlemen who are bowing to the pretty fellow in the glass, while they pretend to be making obeisance to the company, I am convinced she has no reason to dread that he ever will be the husband of my Horatia Clifford.

Adieu !

Yours, affectionately,

DIANA FRANKLIN.

LETTER LXXVII.

*Miss HORATIA CLIFFORD to Lady DIANA
FRANKLIN.*

MY DEAR LADY DIANA, Southbury-Park, Surry.

THE day after sending my last letter to you, I accompanied Mr. Darnley and my aunt to this place. They had expressed a wish to pass a few days with their friends, Mr. and Mrs. Tranquil. Some time this month I pressed them to put their intention into immediate execution, while the marchioness remained at Richmond, that I might not be absent when she should return to town. I wished also to have no chance of meeting lord Deanport, for some time, at least.

We have passed some days, very agreeably, with this family. What can be more agreeable than living with benevolent people, of elegant manners, cultivated minds, and ac-

commodating tempers ; fond of each other, and esteemed by their neighbours ?

We intended to have remained some time longer ; but I have just received a letter from my brother . He has been already three days in London ; and my uncle, perceiving that I was impatient to see him, and, unwilling to let me go to town alone, we are all to leave this place to-morrow morning. His servant brought your letter this evening. I can have no chance of sleeping until I answer it. I will frankly tell you, my dear lady Diana, that some parts of it vex me. I cannot subscribe to your doctrine of bearing injuries without retaliation, under the refined pretence of despising them, or on the supposition that the aggressor will be sufficiently punished by the painful sensations which malevolence excites.

What sensations malevolence excites none but wicked people can precisely know ; but we see them exult, and express pleasure, in the pain they give to others. This is not

easily to be borne, particularly by those they injure ; nor do I see sufficient reason for not retorting upon them, and making them feel in their turn.

This is absolutely requisite for preserving the peace of society :—forbearance provokes fresh insults.

I could put you in mind, my dear madam, of various instances, in which your having despised the darts of malignity, and remained passive, has only served to draw from your enemies a fresh shower, dipped in sharper poison than the former.

It is true, the point fell blunted to the ground, and the poison had no effect : but the aggressors were equally criminal ; and their remaining unpunished will render them still more ready to make new attacks on you or others.

You will say, that we are enjoined to forgive our enemies. I cannot think that precept is to be understood in the literal sense, and to the extent you do ; for those who con-

tend for this entire forgiveness still think it their duty to give testimony against their injurers, and to deliver them up to the cognizance of law. I am persuaded, therefore, that this precept is wrong interpreted. When the injurer expresses sorrow or contrition, no mortal would be more ready to forgive than I ; and, if those who had injured me were fallen into misfortune and misery, I hope I should have no hesitation in endeavouring to relieve them ; but to allow an arrogant woman to insult and tread upon me, as if I were a worm, without using the privilege which even worms use, is a degree of patience and long suffering which I cannot attain.

Besides, though it is written that we ought to forgive our own enemies, yet it is nowhere written that we are bound to forgive the enemies of our friends.—No, my dearest lady Diana, I have endeavoured to imitate you in many things, particularly in that attachment to your friends, which remains unshaken, not only by their errors, but (and

this is still more rare) even by their misfortunes, it never will be in my power, from the heart, to forgive those who calumniate, and show an inclination to injure, the persons I love and reverence.

The construction which, you say, may be put on coquetry, never occurred to me before. Acquitting me entirely of it, in that sense of the word, you still accuse me of having deceived lord Deanport, by listening to his addresses with an air of greater satisfaction than I had done before;—but you forget that I told you, in my last, my dear lady Diana, that, after he expressed a desire to serve Mrs. Denham's family, I really felt more good-will to the man; and, though I still continued to put a just value on the silly things he whispered in my ear, yet they did not create the same disgust as formerly:—so that very little deceit can be laid to my charge on that account. And as for the attentions I showed him, immediately after lady Deanport and the Moystons had behaved

with such rudeness to me, if you had been present to see how much my complaisance disconcerted her ladyship, teased the aunt and niece, and set the whole three a *fidgetting*, I am convinced you would have been very much entertained ; and, I cannot help being still of opinion, that the entertainment was a **very** innocent one.

As for the effect which any harmless gaiety of mine may have on him, or on any presumptuous fool or libertine whatever, I do not think myself at all answerable for it. Your ladyship, however, may be in the right in supposing that the small alteration in my conduct produced the audacity of his ; and that idea will, you may be assured, keep me on my guard, to prevent his having any opportunity of renewing it in future.

Whether the change in lady Deanport's behaviour is a complete proof of her having no displeasure at her son's attentions to me, as your ladyship supposes, is what I cannot determine ; nor can I comprehend from what

motive she acts :—but of this I am certain, that I wish to have no further intercourse of any kind with him, and as little as possible with her ladyship.

Having now said every thing I wished, on certain expressions in your letter, which, I own, hurt me a little, I shall go to bed and dream of my meeting with William, instead of dreaming of those same expressions, as I certainly should have done, had I not told you all that was on my heart.

Farewell ! my dearest lady Diana. Continue to love your own

HORATIA CLIFFORD.

LETTER LXXVIII.

JAMES GRINDILL, *Esg. to the Countess of
DEANPORT.*

MY DEAR COUNTESS,

—shire, South Wales.

I DID not imagine that the devil himself could have contrived any thing more vexatious to me than that which was the subject of my last letter.

I now find that I have under-rated the devil's talents :—he has improved on his last by a new invention to torment me ; and he instigates the very person, from whom I expected relief in the midst of my sufferings, to point it against me with the most infernal energy.

I have just received a letter from lord Deanport, full of reproaches. He accuses me of exciting your ladyship to tease him to form connections which he loaths, and to prejudice him against persons he loves. He advises me to take no farther concern in his affairs, but

to look after my own, adding, with an infernal sneer, “ that he understands they require my *utmost attention.*” He does not condescend to explain the cause of his ill-humour ; but Townly informs me “ that lord Deanport had failed in the execution of his instructions, had made a premature and feeble attack on the damsel, by which, instead of carrying her on his own terms, he had discovered to her that she could have him on hers ; and, in consequence of this, she had beaten him out of his pursuit, and dismissed him from her presence, with all the dignity of the heroine of a romance; which has enraged him against me, made him break with Townly, and rendered him more her admirer than before.”

—Townly adds, “ that he is fully convinced that the next news I shall hear of them will be their marriage ; for it is next to be doubted that a woman of so much address as miss Clifford has shown herself to be, will, to prevent accidents and anticipate his repentance,

take care to have the ceremony performed as soon after the proposal as possible."

I dare swear he has already made the proposal, and that his lordship's fury against me is in consequence of an explanation and treaty with the lady.

This is the more likely, as Townly informs me that miss Clifford's brother is returned from abroad, and, since his arrival at London, has been much with his lordship.— I know they were intimate formerly.

This, unquestionably, is an unfortunate business, and much to be regretted. Nothing could have been more wisely arranged than your ladyship's scheme of uniting him to miss Moston. *She* would have been easily guided by your ladyship; her immense fortune would have enabled him to be useful to his friends; and she would have enjoyed about as much of his affections as miss Clifford will do half a year hence. These considerations are, no doubt, painful. My fear that they may

make too deep an impression on a mind of such exquisite sensibility as that of your ladyship, and, perhaps, prompt you to a conduct inconsistent with your usual prudence and lasting interest, is the cause of my submitting the following suggestions to your calm consideration.

In the present state of lord Deanport's mind, he is not to be reasoned with. Opposition to what he seems so determined on would be vain, and might provoke him to measures highly distressing to your ladyship. *If I remember right, the additional thousand pounds of jointure is not as yet confirmed by an irrevocable deed.*

Your ladyship has already condescended to make advances to miss Clifford. Though this was done with different prospects than exist at present, yet it will be highly expedient to continue the same conduct, and let her carry her point : she cannot fail being greatly flattered. Her influence with lord Deanport will be without any limits while it lasts—but it will

not last long after their marriage. You may apply that interval to an important use. The young lady is of a careless disposition respecting money: the least hint, if you are on friendly terms with her, will make her eager to fix the affair of the jointure—vanity will hurry her on to it. The time will come, no doubt, when she will repent it; and that time will be when his lordship begins to feel remorse for having preferred her to miss Moxton. He will regret, at the same time, very probably, the augmentation of your jointure; but it will then be too late.

From what I have heard of miss Clifford, I am convinced that, while she lives on good terms with her husband, she will allow no other person to have the management of him: but they will not live on good terms a vast while. Her beauty, which, whatever other qualities she may possess, is the only one that *he* values, will soon become familiar to him. Women, whom at present he considers as less handsome, will then appear more beautiful

than her. He will neglect her ; she will despise him, without taking the trouble to conceal it ; in consequence of which he will hate her. Your ladyship will then seize the reins ; and may, with prudent management and address, govern him for life.

I heartily hope that your admirable good sense will prevent the recollection of miss Clifford's former insolence from precluding, or even retarding, a line of conduct so strongly required by the present circumstances. Let not your pride be at all alarmed by this behaviour. Please to recollect, that by acting as I advise, so far from submitting to miss Clifford, you are using her as a mere tool for effecting your own purposes. Though I desire you to conciliate the mind of the girl by every appearance of affection, you cannot think I have an idea that your ladyship should abate the least portion of the genuine hatred you feel against her, and which you may rely on my assisting you to gratify, at a proper oppor-

tunity, by any safe means which you may propose.

Your ladyship knows of what importance his lordship's favour is to me, particularly after the diabolical dispensation that has lately taken place: you cannot doubt, therefore, of my having adopted the plan I recommend. Notwithstanding the stinging severity of some expressions in his letter to me, I have answered in a style calculated to remove his resentment:—in the language of self-condemnation, I retract every insinuation against the purity of miss Clifford's character and the lustre of her beauty—I pretend to have just received the most delightful account of that young lady's disposition from a person who had known her from her childhood: no accomplishment or quality that can render a woman amiable is omitted.—I hope he will show her my letter.—I take due notice of his discernment in preferring her to such a vulgar dowdy as miss Moyston, and selecting

such a genuine jewel from the counterfeits that glitter in every assembly. This would be thought too sudden a wheel, and too strong a dose of flattery, by those who are unacquainted with the real reach of his discernment, and his capacity in swallowing praise.

I hope soon to have the honour of throwing myself at the feet of your ladyship; being, with the sincerest and most inviolable attachment,

Your faithful, &c.

J. GRINDILL.

P.S. I saw a gentleman yesterday who had just arrived from London: he told me that he had seen your ladyship at an assembly with Mrs. Demure; he gave me the pleasure of knowing that you looked charmingly: he also commended her appearance. But I could not help smiling when he added—"that what struck him most was the looks of mutual

affection that passed between you and that lady :" he said " it afforded him real pleasure to see such genuine marks of friendship, as, he was persuaded, existed between you."

From the account with which you once favoured me of that lady, it is pretty evident that this gentleman is no very accurate physiognomist.

LETTER LXXIX.

Mrs. BERKLEY to LADY DIANA FRANKLIN.

DEAR LADY DIANA,

Exeter.

I INTENDED to have done myself the honour of waiting on you ; but am prevented by a threatening of my old complaint ; which obliges me to trouble you with this letter : the subject of which I shall acquaint you with in as few words as I can.

My nephew, Mr. Carelton, I find, is greatly smitten with your young friend miss Clifford. Indeed, I am not surprised at it ; for, though I understand she has no such fortune as could be a temptation to him, yet, I must confess, that a lovelier or genteeler young woman I have seldom seen, either in Devonshire, London, or any-where else.

He informs me, that his intention, when last in London, was to have mentioned this matter to miss Clifford's uncle, Mr. Darnley ;

of whom, by the way, every body, almost without exception, speaks well : but, understanding that the earl of Deanport was at that time paying his addresses to her, he thought it most prudent to desist. But, since he came to the country, he has received a letter from one of his friends in London, assuring him that his lordship's suit is now entirely at an end. As soon, therefore, as my nephew has concluded the business which brought him to the country, I have reason to believe that he intends to return directly to London, with a view to pay his addresses to miss Clifford.

I can assure your ladyship, that, both from what I saw, and from what I have heard you and others relate, of that young lady, I most heartily wish he may succeed. The chief consideration, which renders this at all doubtful to me, is her having refused lord Deanport ; because it rarely happens that a simple gentlewoman refuses to marry an earl ; and the reason is plain,—though men have va-

rious methods of being made lords, marriage is the only means by which spinsters can be made ladies. But miss Clifford's refusing him may have proceeded from her having a prepossession for, or being under an insurmountable engagement with, another. If either of those happens to be the case, I should take it as a great favour, and yet not greater, I hope, than your friendship for me will incline you to bestow, to give me a hint of it.

My reason for making this request I will frankly tell to your ladyship. About seven or eight years ago, when my nephew was only twenty years of age, he fell desperately in love with a lady, five years, at least, older than himself, but still a good deal admired for her beauty ; who, after having encouraged his addresses some months, married a rich West-India merchant, to whom she said she had been engaged from her childhood.

In consequence of this, my nephew fell into a dejection of spirits, which alarmed all his

friends, and particularly myself, who have the most affectionate regard for him,—as well I may, for a better disposed young man, I will venture to say, England cannot boast.

My nephew succeeded to the great Wiltshire estate the year immediately after, though there had been no less than two lives between him and it at the time when the lady preferred her merchant, who, by the way, has since become a bankrupt, which made her, no doubt, grievously repent having refused my nephew. I do not mention this from any satisfaction it gives me, for I hope I am a better Christian than to rejoice in any person's misfortune; but I cannot help thinking, that whatever pain and remorse this woman may experience, she well deserves it, as a just punishment for her folly.

To cure him of love, my nephew was advised to turn his head to politics, because they usually beget hatred. He accordingly obtained a seat in Parliament, applied his mind to public affairs, and his spirits have

ever since been rising in proportion to the prosperity of the country.

With regard to both his own estates, I believe I need not inform your ladyship, that, taken together, they are considerably more valuable than lord Deanport's, and they are quite clear of debts and incumberances. I know that your ladyship regards titles and estate as of less importance than a good character ; and I dare say you have inspired the same sentiments into your young friend, who has been for some years in a manner what lady Mincing calls your *cl'vec*.

I shall therefore give you my nephew's character in a few words. He is a stout comely youth, of twenty-nine years of age ; rather full-faced ; and in person, what lady Mincing, who often prefers a French word to an English, would call *embonpoint*, though *plump*, in my opinion, would do as well.

He is good-natured and obliging, having always, from his youth, done to the best of his abilities what his nearest relations desired him

to do ; which, your ladyship will admit, is a valuable disposition in a husband ; because, when a man is married, his wife becomes his nearest relation.

He is of a sedate temper, and solid understanding, though given to silence through modesty. He never spoke in the House of Commons but once ; when, in the middle of a debate, a certain noisy member, looking accidentally at him, bellowed, “ Hear ! hear ! hear ! ”—to which my nephew calmly replied, “ *I never do any thing else, sir ;* ” which immediately got the applause of the whole house, and showed that he could speak to the purpose when he pleased.

My nephew is rather charitable to the poor than otherwise, which, I know, is a quality particularly esteemed by your ladyship ; and, I dare say, he will be more so still, if miss Clifford desires him.

Your ladyship may have heard it laid to my nephew’s charge, that he never applies to the people in power, with whom he has influ-

ence, in favour of any of his poor friends or acquaintance. This is very true ; but it does not proceed from want of good-will to the people, but merely because, as he needs nothing for himself, he does not choose to be laid under any kind of obligation. As he keeps a remarkably good table, is extremely hospitable, and represents one of the oldest families in the county, few men are more respected.

Having now, using the freedom of an old acquaintance, represented those things to your ladyship, I renew my request, that if you know (and nobody is so likely to know it as yourself) of miss Clifford's being engaged to another man, you will be so obliging as to acquaint me, that I may prevent my nephew from embarking in a hopeless project, and being subjected to a mortification similar to that from which he suffered so severely on a former occasion.

But, on the contrary, if the dear young lady is entirely disengaged, my nephew will

immediately set out for London, to pay his address to her, in the hopes that you will promote his suit with your influence:—in doing which, your ladyship will not only most particularly oblige an old friend; but also, as I am firmly persuaded, greatly contribute to the happiness of the young lady.

I beg you will present my best compliments to Mrs. Denham, whom every body must think exceedingly lucky, in the midst of her misfortunes, in having a friend like you.

I remain, your ladyship's

most sincere friend,

and obedient servant,

A. BERKLEY.

LETTER LXXX.

Lady Diana Franklin to Miss Horatia Clifford.

Plimpton.

IF you were as determined to live single as I am, my dear Horatia, you would find it more difficult to adhere to your resolution than I ever did ; because a greater number of people are interested in persuading you to abandon it. No sooner have you dismissed one suitor than another appears.

I have just received the inclosed letter from my old acquaintance Mrs. Berkley.—I do not remember ever to have seen the gentleman ; but I have often heard him spoken of as a very worthy man. Every body agrees in his being extremely good-natured, modest, and by no means deficient in understanding. He is of an honourable family, much respected in the county. He appears to greater disad-

vantage in his aunt's letter than in any account I ever received of him ; but that proceeds from the peculiar character and style of my old friend, and will have no effect on your judgment, particularly as you have seen, and are in some degree acquainted with, Mr. Carleton.

Modesty and good-nature are valuable qualities ; and, when joined to a good understanding, never fail to form an estimable character, and one far more likely to secure domestic felicity than some which are composed of more brilliant qualities. How many women have I known, who have been rendered neglected and miserable wives by those very qualities in their husbands for which they themselves most admired them before marriage ! whereas good-nature, probity, and plain good sense, are securities for a man's continuing an affectionate husband to a virtuous wife for ever. And if, with these, he is in possession of a large fortune, the pleasure of her life will increase with her power of doing good.

A woman of this disposition is not only an ornament to her husband, but an extensive blessing to the country in which she lives.

That she might not imagine I had consulted you before I answered her letter, I wrote to Mrs. Berkley directly, that I knew of no engagement of the nature she mentioned ; that I knew too little of Mr. Carelton to offer any advice ; and so, with a few civil expressions to my old friend, concluded my letter. I dare say you will see Mr. Carelton some time next week, and will then judge for yourself ; but, before you come to an absolute decision, I shall, perhaps, hear from you.

I hope you will have a happy meeting with your brother.—Adieu, my dearest Horatia !

D. FRANKLIN.

LETTER LXXXI.

*Miss HORATIA CLIFFORD to Lady DIANA
FRANKLIN.*

London.

I CONFESS, my dear lady Diana, that I am a little mortified at your having answered that strange letter of Mrs. Berkley in the style you did ; as also with the conclusion of yours to me, in which you seem to think me in such danger of marrying a libertine wit, that you are disposed to push me into the arms of a good-natured dunce.

Though I do not expect ever to experience the mighty passion of love in the degree that poets and romance-writers describe, yet I hope not to be thought very romantic in determining never to be the wife of a man for whom I have not a very high esteem. And, without harbouring any doubt of the gentleman in question being sedate, good-natured, well-

disposed, and *plump* into the bargain, I acknowledge that I do not precisely entertain that sentiment for him.

I will not condemn those women, who, having no warmer sentiment for any other, consent to marry men, for whom they have a complete indifference, from views of wealth, grandeur, or from compliance with the request of their relations ; but I cannot envy them their prudence nor complaisance. I was blest with parents who never would have urged me on such a subject : but, had it been otherwise, I am convinced I should have displayed a degree of resistance to their inclination which I never showed on any other occasion.

On this principle I acted, when, pretty early in life, I refused the hand of a young man of immense wealth, abroad ; and, lately, when, with less hesitation, I rejected the proposals of lord Deanport. I never, for a moment, repented my determination, and, I am fully satisfied, never shall. Yet I imagine

that I have a due regard for wealth, and that I put a proper value on the comforts and conveniences it puts in our power. From such observations as I have been able to make, I am led to believe, that few things are so much over-valued, in this country particularly, as riches.

For my part, I am certain that I should feel more lasting mortification and pain from being put to the blush by one instance of ignorance, dulness, want of spirit, or of generosity, in my husband, than I could receive pleasure from his possessing the wealth of ten nabobs, and living in all the magnificence of the East.—Good Heaven! how many personages do we see yawning through life in magnificence! I have a notion that I know a greater number of very opulent people, particularly of our sex, who pass their lives with less enjoyment, and more fretting, than any class, except, perhaps, those who are in want of the common conveniences of life.

The fate of poor Fanny Faukener, with whom I was intimately acquainted at Lausanne, made a strong impression on my mind.

I have known few young women of more amiable dispositions, more accomplished, or more capable of rendering a man of sense and sentiment happy, and of being rendered happy by him.

Her greatest weakness lay in her having too little reliance in her own judgment, and being too pliant to the importunities of others. She was persuaded, by her relations, to marry Mr. Buckram, a young man who, by the death of an elder brother, had acquired an immense fortune. Her relations assured her, “that he was the best young man in the world;” and when she confessed to them, that, in spite of his good qualities, it was impossible for her to meet with a man for whom she could feel more indifference, she was told, *that* was an objection of no importance, because she might

come to like him more, but would never like him less, which was an advantage many married women did not enjoy. She might, perhaps, have taken a small bias in his favour, from the reflection that he had given a preference to her over the prodigious number of young ladies in London, whom he might have had for the asking ; but one of her good-natured friends informed her in confidence, a little after her marriage, that Mr. Buckram had never once thought of paying his addresses to her until he was desired to do so by his grandmother.

Yet, although Mr. Buckram had never paid miss Faukener any particular attention before, he thought it his duty to fall in love with her as soon as his grandmother signified her inclination that he should do so ; and, from the same sense of duty and decorum, he was very attentive to her after she became his wife.

Mr. Buckram was a great observer of decorum and uniformity, and particularly fond

of whatever was new. As he had taken a wife, which was quite a *new* thing to him, to please his grandmother, he resolved to have other parts of his establishment as new as her, to please himself.

He therefore took a new house, ordered new furniture, new carriages, new liveries ; caused his old pictures, particularly a Holy Family by Raphael, to be new varnished ; and he exchanged an antique statue, which his father had brought from Rome, for one a great deal newer. He rejected the proposal of having some old family-jewels to be new set for his wife, and ordered others for her, all spick and span new :—in short, every thing he presented her with was new, except his ideas : of these he had but a scanty portion ; and, what few he had, were worn threadbare by use.

The frequent repetition of observations, not worth making, was rather tiresome to the most patient of his acquaintance, but to his wife became oppressive. As Mr. Buckram

was a very good-natured man, he would probably have corrected this, in some degree, if he had had any suspicion of it; but, unfortunately, however tiresome his observations were to others, they seemed so amusing to himself, that he generally introduced them with a simper, and accompanied them with a laugh.

As young Mr. Buckram lived as well, according to the phrase, as most men, he had abundance of visitors. His house was peculiarly convenient to some of his wife's relations, who were fond of entertainments, and to whom it was more agreeable to enjoy them in their friends' houses than in their own. Poor Fanny was thought by some to have been made a sacrifice to this taste of her nearest relations; for, whatever happiness they might have in her house, she had none. She was miserable, however, in a different style from other unfortunate people; not from want, but from superabundance:—she had a profusion of every thing, and seemed

to have a relish for nothing. There were few things of which she had a greater share, and for which she had a smaller relish, than her husband's company : indeed, few women would have been flattered with the reason he gave for bestowing on her so much of it. He said he considered it as a duty, incumbent on every husband, to be as much with his wife as his other avocations would permit. What he began from a sense of duty, he continued from habit. But habit had an opposite effect on her : she relished his company less and less ; and, when she told him that she was so dejected she could not utter a word (which was often the case), he declared that he would remain with her, on purpose to raise her spirits by his conversation.

When I first knew Fanny Faulkener, she lived with her mother, in a frugal manner, and she was one of the most cheerful girls I was ever acquainted with.

When I visited her after her marriage, I found her in a house like a palace, surround-

ed with gaudy superfluity ; but she, herself, with a face of languor and dejection. At sight of me her features were enlivened ; I recognised the countenance of my old companion ; but, her husband coming in, it resumed its former dejection. Nothing, to be sure, could be more teasingly ceremonious than the behaviour, or more oppressively insipid than the conversation, of this worthy man. His wife blushed as often as he spoke. She made one attempt to get rid of him, by putting him in mind of an engagement. "There would be more impropriety," said he, "in leaving you and this lady, my dear, than in breaking the engagement."—I intreated he might use no ceremony. He said "he understood politeness better."

When I saw the café desperate, I rose to withdraw. He led me through several rooms to exhibit his new-coloured pictures, and the splendor of the furniture.—" You see, madam," said he, addressing me, " that your friend is in possession of every thing that can

render a woman happy."—The tears started into my poor friend's eyes; and I hurried away, that she might not see I had perceived it.

If I had not been so determined before, this example would have made me resolve never to be the wife of a man I did not both love and esteem in a supreme degree, whatever his wealth and his good-nature might be.

Unquestionably, instances may be produced of women who have been rendered unhappy by husbands whom they both loved and esteemed at the time of their marriage:—but even those women, though on the whole unfortunate, had enjoyment for a certain period at least; whereas poor Mrs. Buckram has never had a day free from *tedium* since that of her marriage. Her hours, which formerly danced away as lightly as those of Guido's Aurora, now move at a snail's pace, along a heavy cheerless road. All she has

to quicken them is, a constant *routine* of entertainments she *dislikes*, in the company of a man whom she was persuaded to marry on account of his riches ; who, she knew, had married her at the request of his *grandmother* ; who kept her company at first from a sense of *duty* ; and who now declares he can no more live without her than he can without snuff. She hears it daily repeated, however, by her own relations, that she has been wonderfully fortunate in her marriage, and that she is one of the happiest women in England ; and if any of her husband's relations, particularly his grandmother, chance to be present, the poor girl suppresses a sigh, constrains her features into a smile, and answers—“ Oh dear ! yes, I am very—very happy indeed !”

I am certain, my friend, that a want of elevation of mind in my husband, an insensibility to that honourable distinction which arises from talent and character, would render my fate similar to that of poor Fanny Faul-

ener. Good sense, generosity, and spirit, with humanity, are indispensable requisites in the husband who has any chance to render my condition happier than it is.

I began this immediately after receiving yours ; and shall send it by this night's post, that you may contrive, if possible, to save the plump gentleman the fatigue of a journey to London, and a mortification when he arrives, that I am convinced will be as painful for me to give, as for him to receive.

I have not yet seen my brother. I expect that pleasure every minute.

Adieu ! my dear lady Diana.

H. CLIFFORD.

LETTER LXXXII.

*Lady DIANA FRANKLIN to Miss HORATIA
CLIFFORD.*

MY DEAR HORATIA,

Plimpton.

I WRITE this to free you from all apprehension of being visited by the person whose addresses would, you say, distress you. Immediately on receiving yours, I wrote to Mrs. Berkley in terms that will, unquestionably, induce her to prevent her nephew from taking the journey he intended.

Perhaps I judged wrong in sending you her letter. But as you had frequently seen, and were, in some degree, acquainted with the gentleman, and, as I expected that, at all events, you would have opportunities of knowing him still better in the course of the visits he proposed making to you, I thought your judgment would not be misled by the

awkward light in which he is put by my old friend in her letter to me. Instead of making extracts, therefore, I sent you the original.—This might have convinced you that I meant to leave you to your own reflections, without wishing to attempt persuasion.

Be assured, my dear, that I never shall endeavour to persuade you to marry a man you do not like; but knowing that Mr. Carelton was a gentleman much respected in the country, on account of his family, fortune, and benevolent character, I thought it highly proper that you should have allowed yourself to be more fully acquainted with him before you should come to the decision of rejecting his suit.

Though I never shall wish you to marry a man you dislike, yet I am not so fully certain, my dear Horatia, that I may not wish you to dislike some man whom you may have an inclination to marry.—You are wrong in think-

ing I am disposed to push you into the arms of a dunce on purpose to secure you from falling into those of a libertine. I hope you will fall into the hands of neither. But I acknowledge that it is my decided opinion that you would have opportunities of doing more good, and would be a happier woman, on the whole, as the wife of a man of the character of Mr. Carelton, than by being married to a man of brighter talents, looser principles, and less benevolence.

I am sufficiently acquainted with your turn of mind, to know that you are not to be bribed into matrimony by fortune or by rank; but I do think, my dearest Horatia, that there is a possibility of your being allured into it by qualities in a man, which give as little security for a wife's happiness as either fortune or rank; and it would be easy for me to give you the history of women married to men of bright talents and acknowledged wit, who have been rendered fully as unhappy by mar-

riage as your friend Fanny Faulkener. This consideration, my dear, may make those who are solicitous for your welfare wish, that, instead of becoming the wife of a brilliant man of this kind, you were united to a respectable man, of a disposition and fortune to allow your beneficent and generous mind free scope.

I have heard again from the marchioness : she seems highly delighted with what she has seen of the country of England ; she is greatly struck with the high cultivation, the pleasing variety, and smiling verdure of the fields. This is often the case with French people. But I never met with one of them who did not think London *un triste séjour* in comparison with Paris—I mean before the revolution ;—for, since that period, I should think the latter by much the most mournful abode on earth : yet I am told it is not so. I have heard that the Parisian women are more gay and fantastical in their dress than ever ; and that the men brisk through the

streets, humming cheerful airs, as merrily as before.—Is this credible? Or shall we say, that, like Cymon in the fable,

“They whistle as they walk, for want of thought?”

Pray write the moment you have seen your brother.

Yours, affectionately,

D. FRANKLIN.

LETTER LXXXIII.

Miss Horatia Clifford to Lady Diana Franklin.

London.

AFTER so long an absence, I was most impatient to meet my brother.—A few kind expressions in his letter had effaced the impression which some part of his conduct had left on my mind: I recollect~~ed~~ nothing but the agreeable scenes of our childhood, and his striking likeness to my father. On our way to town, I put my uncle and aunt in mind of this resemblance.

My uncle said, “ he hoped that time and reflection would incline William to endeavour, in all respects, to resemble the excellent man to whom he had so strong a likeness in the features of his countenance.” My aunt, with whom my brother ever was a favourite, added, “ that she was sure it would be so.”

The tender remembrance of my father, ever linked to that of my mother, gratitude for the kindness of my uncle and aunt, a thousand endearing ideas and recollections, rushed on my mind at once. When I attempted to thank them for the pleasing hopes they imparted, my heart was so full that I could not articulate—I pressed their hands, and burst into tears; yet my sensations were not painful: and though I hardly spoke during the whole of our journey, my reverie was not painful.

I sent word to my brother of our arrival. We expected to have seen him that night—he did not come till the following day.

Mrs. Demure called soon after breakfast. As my uncle expected William every instant, and did not wish to have our first interview disturbed with the presence of any stranger, he had given orders to admit nobody.

Mrs. Demure found her way in, notwithstanding. She made her apology, by saying

"she knew we were all at home, and waiting for my brother ; that she would withdraw as soon as he arrived ; but, in the interval, she hoped we would forgive her impatience to see friends for whom she had so high a value as soon as possible after their return from the country."

I asked if she had seen my brother, and how he looked.

She answered, with a vivacity unusual to her, "that she *had* seen him the preceding night at lady Deanport's assembly, to which he had been brought by his lordship, with whom he had almost constantly been ever since his arrival ; that his appearance was generally admired ; and some of the ladies present had pronounced him to be the handsomest man in town.

"That would not have been the case, perhaps," said my uncle, "if your friend Mr. Mordaunt had been present."

"My friend!" she repeated, with an air

of surprise.—“ I cannot conceive, Mr. Darnley, what should make you think Mr. Mordaunt a particular friend of mine.”

“ I did not say a *particular* friend, madam,” replied Mr. Darnley.

“ Mr. Mordaunt,” resumed she, “ is, unquestionably, of my acquaintance.”

“ I meant no more,” said he.—“ We are apt to call people’s acquaintance their friends, though the people themselves may, perhaps, have reason to think them their enemies.”

“ We are so, Mr. Darnley,” replied she, simpering, and with an air of indifference: “ but the person you mentioned happens to be neither friend nor enemy of mine. Yet, if I recollect his figure perfectly, even if he were in town, I should think Mr. Clifford still the handsomest—Would not *you*, my dear?” added she, looking to me.

I reminded her that I had been in the country or abroad when Mr. Mordaunt was

last in town, and had never seen the gentleman.

My aunt said “ she had seen him ; that he was, certainly, both a handsome and an agreeable man : though,” she added, “ I must confess I am of Mrs. Demure’s opinion, that he is not quite so handsome as my nephew.”

“ Quite so handsome !” exclaimed Mrs. Demure ; “ not within a hundred degrees so handsome: nor can he be compared with your nephew, Mr. Darnley, in any respect, either in mind or body.”

“ I will not pretend to give any opinion on Mr. Mordaunt’s beauty, after the point has been decided against him by much better judges,” said my uncle, smiling; “ but I think he is generally allowed to be a man of wit.”

“ Many a man,” replied Mrs. Demure, “ who passes for a wit among fools, would be thought a fool among wits.”

“ It is pretty clear,” said my uncle, “ that

the gentleman in question has not had the wit to retain your favourable opinion."

" He could not retain what he never possessed," replied she, with quickness. Then, turning to my aunt and me, she added—" I cannot conceive how we come to talk so much about a man whom none present have any concern with, when we are in expectation of seeing one in whom we are all so much interested."

This is not the first time I have remarked that the mention of the name of Mr. Mordaunt seemed to agitate Mrs. Demure. There are particular points on which the most circumspect are thrown off their guard. Mrs. Demure creates a strong suspicion that Mr. Mordaunt is a person who interests her a great deal, by her earnest and repeated declarations that he does not interest her at all.

What my uncle said was without any meaning beyond the plain import of his words. He mentioned Mr. Mordaunt merely

as a common acquaintance of Mrs. Demure's. I have some reason to believe he thinks somewhat differently now.

Mrs. Demure regretted that my brother was on such an intimate footing with lord Deanport, who seems to be as little a favourite of hers as Mr. Mordaunt.

I recollect lord Deanport's having told me that he had met with my brother abroad. He spoke of him in high terms of commendation. The panegyric afforded me small satisfaction, because I had no high opinion either of his lordship's sincerity or judgment.

My brother did not arrive till near one o'clock. He was received by Mr. and Mrs. Darnley in the most affectionate manner. I need not tell you how I was affected at seeing him. Mrs. Demure did not leave us till a considerable time after his arrival. She then repeated her apology for having intruded at such a moment among near relations; for which, she hoped, her warm regard for *all*

the company would be received as an excuse.

My brother handed her to her carriage—a ceremony I hardly ever saw him perform; but, indeed, he could not well avoid it on the present occasion; for, as she retired, she actually presented her hand to him; and, after she was in the carriage, he continued to speak to him with an air of great satisfaction, and did not order her coachman to drive on till she saw me at the window.

My aunt had before this told me, “that, previous to my brother’s going abroad, he had seemed to be a good deal captivated with Mrs. Demure; that her behaviour then was so cold to him, that he had fallen off in his affiduities; but that she had certainly repented afterwards of the neglect she had shown him, for of late she seemed fond of speaking of my brother to her, and always with commendation.”

My aunt at one time added, “that if Mrs. Demure really had a partiality for William,

which she began to hope, nothing could be more fortunate for him ; because she would make just such a wife as suited him in all respects, being a woman of great beauty, wealthy, and of admirable good sense."

If this woman were possessed of all the wealth of Peru, I should be shocked with the alliance. The emotion she always betrays at the name of Mordaunt I do not like ; the adventure in Kensington has left a very unfavourable impression on my mind ; and I am by no means pleased with her behaviour to my aunt. Though she is more cautious before my uncle, she flatters her intolerably when he is not present.—After pouring forth rather a profusion of this incense, the other day, she ventured to insinuate something in favour of the acuteness of her discernment and reach of her judgment. My aunt blushed—begged she would give over ;—but that same evening she told me, “ that Mrs. Deinure was by much the most judicious woman of her acquaintance.”

My aunt told me, at the same time “ that she had blamed her friend for the coldness she had formerly shown to William.” This accounts for the alteration in her behaviour now.

She also informed me, “ that Mrs. Demure had succeeded to a considerable West-India estate since the death of her husband ; adding, “ that, as she believed I had more influence with my brother than herself, that I could not use it more for his advantage than by advising him to pay his addresses to Mrs. Demure.”

Without informing her of all I thought on that subject, I answered, “ that the effect of my advice on the last person to whom I ventured to give it was sufficient to prevent my attempting any thing of that nature again ; that a young lady, a relation of my own, who I had reason to believe of as docile a character as my brother, but whose face was rather plain, affected the lisp of a distinguished beauty ; that all her acquaintance knowing that she could speak in the most distinct manner, turn-

ed her into ridicule ; but as I had a great deal of good-will to the young woman, this gave me uneasiness, and I advised her, in the gentlest and most friendly terms, to give over lisping ; she thanked me for my *obliging* advice, has always avoided speaking to me since, and lisps more than ever to all the world beside.”

Where have I been wandering ? Do I not abuse the privilege you gave me of writing whatever occurs ? Without troubling myself with arrangement, I sat down with the intention of giving the particulars of what passed between William and me when we were left alone. I still have time, and now you shall have them.

My dear lady Diana,

I must defer them to another opportunity. My aunt has just informed me that lady Blunt met with a very extraordinary accident as she returned last night from the opera. Her chair was stopped near her own house, which is in a remote street, her footman

knocked down, the flambeau snatched out of his hand, and thrust through the glass of the chair, which was overset, as were both the chairmen, by three ruffians, who rushed suddenly upon them, and, as soon as they had performed this strange exploit, made their escape.

The most unaccountable circumstance is, that no attempt was made to rob her ladyship : but, by the account which my aunt received, her face is scorched by the flambeau, and she is otherwise a good deal hurt.

This affair has agitated and disordered my aunt so much, that I do not choose to quit her long.

Adieu ! my beloved friend.

H. C.

LETTER LXXXIV.

*Miss HORATIA CLIFFORD to Lady DIANA
FRANKLIN.*

London.

I WAS a good deal surprised to find Mrs. Demure again with my aunt in the evening. Her pretext for calling was to know the particulars of the accident that has happened to lady Blunt, for whom she expressed very great concern. She informed us, however, of a circumstance we had not before heard. The three men who stopped her ladyship's chair were frightened, it seems, by a carriage which was passing. This accounts for their having fled without robbing her; and renders it probable, that their thrusting the burning torch into the chair happened in consequence of their alarm and confusion. Poor lady Blunt is miserably scorched, but in no danger.

If Mrs. Demure returned in the evening in the hope of seeing William, she was disappointed. He sent a note to inform Mr. Darnley that he was engaged to supper. A little after this note arrived, Mrs. Demure recollect ed that she had an engagement, and took her leave.

I will now inform you of what passed between William and me on the day we first met.

As soon as my uncle and aunt left us together, my brother informed me, “ that lord Deanport had acquainted him with what he, termed his *passion* for me, and that he had authorised him to make me an offer of his hand.”

I expressed my obligation to his lordship ; but assured my brother that I declined the offer.

He affected to believe that I was not in earnest, saying, “ he was sure I could not be *so great a fool* as to refuse an alliance so very honourable.”

I told him that “I really was a fool of that magnitude.”

“ What !” said he, “ have you entered into any rash engagement with another man, which you fancy you cannot get over ?”

“ I am not quite such a fool as that,” I replied.

“ Come, come, Horatia,” said he, “ let us talk frankly : I know you are a girl of sense and spirit ; I know also that you have your own share of pride. You are provoked that lady Deanport should have shown herself averse to her son’s inclinations : but we must make allowances for the humours of an ambitious woman, who certainly had higher views for a son, whose rank and fortune entitle him to the hand of the noblest heiress in England.”

“ I not only make allowance for her humours, my dear brother,” answered I, “ but I heartily wish her success in her high views ; and I am as averse as her ladyship

can possibly be to her son's giving up his hopes of the noblest heiress in England, and dwindling to the husband of a plain spinstress, the sister of William Clifford."

Deceived by the playful manner in which I spoke this, he seemed still more convinced that I was entirely in jest.

" You will no sooner be countess of Deanport," said he, " than you will be totally independent of her ladyship."

" I cannot be more independent of her than I am at present."

" I can assure you, my dear sister, that you will have nothing to fear from that quarter; for, between you and me, lord Deanport has no great veneration for her ladyship."

" You cannot mean it as a recommendation of his lordship, my dear William, that he has no veneration for his mother."

" Poh! you know what I mean," said he.—But, though lord Deanport seems a little

vain and haughty, yet, upon the whole, he is of a character that may easily be governed."

"But I am of a character, not to wish a man for my husband who needs to be governed."

"Why your favourite, Pope, says," rejoined he, "that *every woman would be queen for life.*"

"I suspect that Pope understood poetry better than women, brother."

"In this article, however, I have a great notion that his maxim is just," replied he.

"Well, if you will think it just in general, you must allow me to be an exception ; for, so far from wishing to be a queen, I do not desire even to be a countess."

"Poh ! poh ! we have had enough of jesting. This is an important business, and the sooner it is finally concluded the better. You must be sensible, sister, that I sincerely wish your happiness."

“ Are not you sensible, my dear brother, that I wish it as sincerely?”

“ Whatever you may wish, you do not seem to know so well how it is to be obtained.”

“ Now, my dear William, do you really, in your conscience, think, that, with all your superior knowledge in other respects, you are a better judge than myself of what will make me happy?”

“ Without entering into a needless dispute,” replied he, “ about which is the *best* judge, since there can be no doubt that we both have your happiness at heart, let us cordially join in bringing it about.—It will be rendered more certain by your marriage with lord Deanport, than by any other measure that can be adopted.—He is my friend — You do not know the happiness that awaits you.—Let me guide you, my dear Horatia, in this point.”

“ That is to say, my dear William,” replied I, “ that, before it is determined which is the best judge, you would have me to make you the *sole* judge.”

Without taking any notice of this, he proceeded to enumerate all the tempting circumstances that would result to me from such a splendid connection. When he had finished, “One essential advantage,” I said, “would still be wanting.”

“What is that?” said he.

“Sincere affection for my husband,” replied I.

“Affection!” repeated he, with a peevish and disdainful tone. “Why should you want affection for him?”

“It is unnecessary to declare *why*,” said I, calmly; “since, whatever be the cause, the fact is certain.”

He seemed provoked, and spoke in a passionate manner.

“After so long an absence, my dear William,” said I, “taking hold of his hand, let us not quarrel the very first day we meet. Why should our thinking differently on a subject, which personally concerns me only, occasion any coldness between us?”

“ It concerns me very materially also,” said he.

“ How ?”

“ Lord Deanport is my friend.”

“ Let him remain your friend : I shall regard him as such ; but shall never be connected with him by any nearer tie. And I cannot conceive why that should disturb you.”

“ I lie under obligations to lord Deanport,” said he.

“ Obligations to lord Deanport !” exclaimed I.

“ Yes, I owe him a gaming debt of considerable amount, which I contracted abroad ; and he has advanced me two thousand pounds, which I had immediate occasion for, since I came to London.”

I was sorry to hear that my brother lay under such obligations to lord Deanport, and shocked at the implication that his mentioning them to me at this time seemed to convey.

I saw nothing pressing, however, in the nature of the first ; but I told him that “ I was surprised he should have thought of borrowing from lord Deanport, and that the borrowed money should be repaid directly ; ” offering at the same time to sell out of the funds for that purpose.

As you disapproved of me formerly, for advancing money to him on a particular emergency, I fear you will blame me, my dear lady Diana, for what I have now done : but I saw my brother distressed ; I could not bear the idea of his remaining in lord Deanport’s debt for money actually advanced. The stock has been sold,—the money was brought to me by my broker,—and I delivered it to my brother, with my own hand, as neither of us wished the transaction to be known. I had before exacted a promise from him that he would lay hi · affairs open to Mr. Darnley, who had expressed a desire to assist him in arranging them ; and that he would restore the management of them to Mr. Proctor. My

brother dined with my uncle and aunt the same day,—declared his intention of setting out in a short time for Northumberland. He seemed in high spirits ; and my uncle, with whom you know he never was a great favourite, was delighted with his behaviour. I cannot help indulging the hope that the inconveniences he has suffered from past imprudence will render him more circumspect in future. Few people can make themselves more agreeable ; and I cannot express how happy it would make me to live on a friendly and confidential footing with him.

I never concealed any part of my conduct from you, my dear madam, without having cause to repent it. Notwithstanding my bold answer to your letter on the subject of coquetry, I formed a resolution, at that very time, never again to conceal from my wifest and best friend any thing of importance regarding myself : for which reason I have now informed you of this last trans-

action between my brother and me ; which, however, is to remain unknown, even to Mr. Darnley and Mr. Proctor, when all the rest of his affairs shall be laid open to them.

I remain

Your ever grateful and obedient

H. CLIFFORD.

LETTER LXXXV.

*The Countys of DEANPORT to JAMES
GRINDILL, Esq.*

London.

I WAS so overpowered with vexation, my dear sir, at the shameful trick which that knavish Welchman played you, before his descent from this world to the next, that I really have been unable, till now, to put pen to paper. I was also greatly shocked at my son's unkind treatment of you ; which, I imagine, he himself will, in a short time, be sensible of. However prudent it might be in you to overlook this treatment, and to cultivate the favour of this miss Clifford, had she become my son's wife, the same line of conduct would have been unbecoming in me ; and even had you convinced me that it would be the wisest and most likely way to screen me from inconveniences, I

should not have had temper to adopt it. There are men, I believe, and perhaps you are one of them, who, to obtain the object they have in view, can submit to the insolence and caprice of those they hate, whether men or women ;—but I never knew a woman who could patiently bear the insolence of another woman, particularly if she looked on the insulter as her inferior. However perfect a mistress in the art of simulation, whatever command of temper she may have in other points, however submissively she may bear the arrogance of the tyrant man, she loses her patience, forgets her prudence, and, at all hazards, retorts the insults of the woman she hates and despises. This single advantage, which your sex possesses, overbalances that superiority in the art of dissembling, in the powers of insinuation, in presence of mind, and other qualities ascribed to us, and renders men, on the whole, abler politicians than women. On the present occasion, my

self-command was not put to trial. Fortunately, I was saved some of the humiliations which you imagined would be necessary for me to submit to ; but I have met with a mortification still less expected.

Townly had good reason for calling my son's attempt on the damsel premature and feeble :—it was, in all respects, worse conducted than any project of the same kind I ever heard of.

Instead of waiting till the favourable disposition she had began to show towards him had warmed into maturity, instead of endeavouring, by a continued respectful and obsequious behaviour, to throw her off her guard,—what does he do?—Why, hearing, one morning, that I had taken the aunt an airing, he waits on the girl with as little ceremony as if it had been by her own appointment ; interrupts her, perhaps, in the middle of her morning prayers, or when she was reading a sermon recommended by her uncle, who, I understand, pretends to

be religious ; and, without being certain that the man was not in the next room, his wife lordship begins to make love to her in a less respectful manne than her had ever before ventured.—Well, what happened ?—Why, the girl must have been a perfect simpleton, or of the disposition of Potiphar's wife, had she surrendered on such a summons. No—she repulsed him in the most sublime style, I'll be bound for it ; and on this ground, and no surer foundation, he now considers her as a lady of immaculate virtue. To confirm him in which chimera, the heroine gives herself high airs, refuses his visits, and returns his letters unopened—all with the intention, no doubt, of drawing him in to make a proposal of marriage. She may chance, however, to push that game a little too far. My son is of a suspicious temper : he does not want pride. It shall be my business to discover to him the game she is playing, and to rouse his indignation till it sur-

mounts what he calls his love, but which evidently deserves another name. I hope, very soon, to have it in my power to inform you of the final termination of the businefs.
Till then, adieu !

E. DEANPORT.

LETTER LXXXVI.

Miss Horatia Clifford to Lady Diana Franklin.

MY DEAR LADY DIANA,

London.

I HAVE the mortification to inform you, that my hopes of living on friendly terms with William are already vanished. He has behaved ungenerously. You shall know every particular.

My uncle was so pleased with his company on the day he dined here, that, contrary to his custom, he pressed him, with earnestness, to remain the whole evening. My brother, however, took his leave rather early, on the pretence of business.—Unfortunate business !

He promised to dine with us the following day ; but, two hours before the hour of dinner, his footman brought a verbal message, importing, “ that it would not be in his power to come.”

I saw him not that day, nor the next. At last, I received a note from him, informing me that he wished to have some private conversation, and mentioning the hour when he expected to find me alone.

I received this note in the presence of my aunt, and thought it not proper to conceal its purport from her. She had before expressed concern at his having been so long without calling: the contents of this note increased her uneasiness.

He came at the hour appointed. I was somewhat shocked at his appearance. His dress was disordered, his eyes inflamed, and his countenance haggard. On my expressing surprise and vexation,—“ I have been very unfortunate,” said he, “ since I last saw you; but I still entertain hopes, my dear, that, on mature reflection, you will accept of lord Deanport. He loves you to distraction. He will make you the happiest of women; and, in my satisfaction at your happiness, I shall forget my own misfortunes. I am deputed

by his lordship to renew his proposal—with this assurance, that he will allow your uncle to fix the terms of settlement. Can any thing be more noble or more generous?—Lady Deanport knows nothing of this: you will have nothing to do with her. My lord is sensible that she has behaved improperly to you:—your triumph over her malice will be complete.”

I need not trouble you with my answer to this fine speech. When he saw that his eloquence was in vain, and that I persevered in the sentiments I had expressed from the beginning, he seemed to have some difficulty to command his temper: the struggle was evident. He did command it, however; and said, even in a milder tone than usual—“ Since you cannot be prevailed on, from considerations of your own interest, I hope you will have the generosity to pay some attention to mine, Horatia.—It is of the greatest importance to me that lord Deanport should not lose all hope of your being one

day his. You will oblige me so far as to keep that hope alive for some time at least."

" How can my behaving in that manner be of the greatest importance to you?" I asked.

" It is unnecessary to declare *how*," replied he, in the words I had made use of at our former conference—" *since, whatever be the cause, the fact is certain.*—All I now require of you is, to behave to his lordship with the appearance of some degree of favour:—this will cost you nothing. A woman of your beauty can keep a man at her devotion for years. You cannot be certain what alteration may take place in your own mind; but if none should, it will be soon enough to acquaint him with your final resolution, when you shall be addressed by some other man, whom you prefer."

I hope, my dear lady Diana, that I should have rejected such a proposal at any rate; but it never could have been made at a time when there was less likelihood of its succeeding

than after my having received your last letter on coquetry, which, notwithstanding the petulance of my answer, has made a deep impression on my mind.

When I inveighed against the deceitfulness of such conduct,—“ No woman,” said he, “ can scruple at a little innocent coquetry.”

“ Some women,” I answered, “ think such coquetry by no means innocent: it would be injurious even to lord Deanport.”

“ On the contrary, it will render him happier. The time spent in courtship is thought to be the happiest of a man’s life.”

“ I would not be a deceiver, though I were sure of producing happiness to myself,” answered I.

“ There is nothing that deserves the name of deceit in what I ask; but it is of the greatest importance to me. You cannot conceive in what distress I shall be involved, if you continue obstinate.”

On my repeating—“ That I did not see how my behaviour to lord Deanport could be

of such consequence to him," he confessed—“ that, instead of applying the two thousand pounds I had advanced to pay lord Deanport, he had lost the greater part of it at play on the very night he received it ; that he had been wretched ever since ; that lord Deanport had called on him that morning, and commissioned him to renew his former proposal ; that, whether I thought proper finally to comply with it or not, he wished to be allowed to tell his lordship that I had no objection to his visiting me occasionally ; that, if he did not carry him an answer in some degree favourable, he dreaded that his lordship's resentment against me would provoke him to press for the immediate payment of the debt.”

“ How !” exclaimed I. “ Did you not assure me that he was your friend ?”

“ Friend !—Friend !”—repeated he, with an ironical air : “ and he will continue to be my friend as long as I can be of any service to him. But, should your conduct provoke him”—

" I have not the least intention to provoke him," said I.

" Your intentions are nothing to the purpose," rejoined he : " his resentment against you may prompt him to distress me."

" I do not think it possible," I said, " that a man of lord Deanport's rank could take a species of vengeance so unjust and despicable."

" Rank !" replied he. " What has his rank to do in the matter ?"

" Well, I cannot think so ill of any man of my acquaintance, be his rank what it will."

" That shows your ignorance of the world," said he.

" And you imagine that lord Deanport is of this character ?" rejoined I.

" I do not positively assert that he is ; but I could not swear that he is not."

" Good heaven ! brother ;—yet you have urged me to marry this man !"

He seemed a little confused at this observation.

" Well," said he, peevishly, " I urge that no more ; but, if he is a bad man, you need have the less scruple at acting as I now desire you."

I then told him " that I certainly should not." I at the same time expressed my regret at his having deceived me, in not applying the two thousand pounds to the extinction of the debt.

" I tell you," said he, " that your two thousand pounds could not have extinguished it : I owed him four. If you had advanced me that sum at once, it would have been extinguished ; but, since you are fond of doing things by halves, instead of agreeing to lord Deanport's proposal, all I desire of you is, to make him believe you *will*, or *may*, agree to it some time hence."

I then assured him " that I never would give lord Deanport the least reason to believe any such thing."

continued he, addressing Mrs. Darnley, "that a man of high rank and fortune, my intimate friend, one whose alliance would do her and all her relations the greatest honour, is at present in her choice; and me, from mere caprice (for she can assign no reason that has a grain of common sense in it), persists in rejecting him."

This authoritative style, and, still more, the manner in which he had mentioned my father, effaced the impression which the tears of my aunt had made on my mind.

I resumed an air of coolness, and said, "that I should have been happy to have lived with him on that friendly footing that was becoming persons so nearly connected, and on which I had always lived with my other relations; but that I never would acknowledge any of that authority which he seemed to arrogate over me; that I had the less reason to be surprised at his not recollecting that he was only my brother, since,

“ My dearest nephew !” resumed she, taking hold of his hand, and bursting into tears, “ what is the meaning of this ?”

“ Let her inform you,” said he.

I was affected by my aunt’s tears :—I, at last, said, with as much calmness as I could muster up, “ My brother has been urging me to a measure I can never adopt, and on which, I think, I have the best right of decision.”

With great intemperance of voice and gesture, he accused me of self-sufficiency, pride, and obstinacy ; said “ My father had spoiled me by too much indulgence ; and that an overweening conceit of my personal charms had quite disordered my brain ; that I had, once before, rendered myself ridiculous, by refusing a most advantageous marriage ; that, however, was in some degree pardonable, on account of my early youth ; but the same allowance would not be made me at the age of twenty-two.—You know, I believe, madam,”

continued he, addressing Mrs. Darnley, “ that a man of high rank and fortune, my intimate friend, one whose alliance would do her and all her relations the greatest honour, is at present in her choice ; and she, from mere caprice (for she can assign no reason that has a grain of common sense in it), persists in rejecting him.”

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in speaking of his father, he had sometimes forgot that he was his son."

He seemed confounded, and made no immediate answer ; and I left the room.

My aunt has since told me, " that, in spite of all she said to pacify him, and prevail on him to stay, he uttered nothing but oaths, and withdrew."

This has given me great uneasiness : but I am muttering up all my philosophy to bear what I cannot alter, and have been languishing for the society of the marchioness to give me the example. I have received a most agreeable letter from her. She comes to town to-morrow. She has heard from her husband, who has been appointed to a very honourable situation in the Ruffian service. He writes to her in high spirits, and she writes to me in the same. He is not quite certain, however, whether it will be in his power to come for her to England. I hope Mrs. Denham's health will permit you to leave her. The

marchioness will be greatly mortified if she has not the pleasure of seeing you before she leaves England.

I am, my dearest madam,

Your ever affectionate

H. CLIFFORD.

LETTER LXXXVII.

*The Countess of DEANPORT to JAMES
GRINDILL, Esq.*

London.

WHEN I last wrote to you, I was convinced that the mighty offence which miss Clifford pretended to have taken at my son's behaviour, and her refusing his visits and letters, were intended to draw from him a proposal of marriage. I took particular care to warn him of this, and prevent his becoming the dupe of such common artifices. He expressed sufficient indignation at the haughty airs the damsel assumed; but not so as to free me entirely from the apprehension that his ridiculous attachment to her was stronger than his anger. My fears were increased by the arrival of the girl's brother, with whom my son had formed an intimacy abroad, and who, having been informed of lord Deanport's attentions to her,

had returned, as I was convinced, at this particular time, for the express purpose of assisting his sister in her scheme to inveigle my son into marriage.

In the midst of my solicitude, Mrs. Demure called on me one day, and told me “that she could give me a piece of news which, she was sure, would astonish me as much as it had done her; namely, that my lord Deanport had made a formal proposal of marriage to miss Clifford.”

I expressed surprise at her giving the least credit to a report dishonourable to my son, and which could have no other foundation than his having condescended to flirt a little with the girl.

“Your ladyship may depend upon it,” said she, “that he carried his flirtation the length of making her a very serious proposal of marriage; yet that need give you no uneasiness, since the young lady has refused him in the most decided terms.”

I asked, if she was mad?

She said “she hoped not; but she understood that his lordship was in danger of running mad with grief at his *rejection*; that she had received the intelligence from Mr. Clifford, who was the more provoked at his sister, because she had refused a *far more* advantageous match before; that the truth of the fact had been confirmed to her by Mrs. Darnley, who was convinced that all fresh solicitation, on the part of lord Deanport, would be vain, for she knew her niece to be rather nice in her choice of a husband, and extremely *proud.*”

However pleased I might have been with this information, I could not help feeling indignation at the arrogance of the creature.

“Proud!” cried I.—“Pray, Mrs. Demure, can you guess for whom this paragon reserves herself? She can have no hopes of being the wife of a prince of the blood—a malicious act of parliament stands in the way.”

“Perhaps, when she can do no better,” re-

plied Mrs. Demure, “ she may condescend to marry a duke. But it is clear that she looks higher than an earl : or, if she can stoop so low as to one of that rank, she has already shown that the *earl of Deanport* is not the person she intends to honour.”

Though she affected to be turning miss Clifford into ridicule, yet I could perceive that she indulged in those and other impertinent expressions, from malice to me ; and, in spite of the pleasure I felt, from the assurance that miss Clifford was not to be my son’s wife, I could have spit in Mrs. Demure’s face for the style in which she conveyed it.

I have been long convinced of this woman’s hatred against me, though I am not certain that she knows the full extent of the reason she has for it. That she has also a spite against miss Clifford is evident enough. The girl’s beauty, indisputably superior to her own, accounts for that : but her hatred against the sister does not prevent Mrs. Demure from spreading her nets for the bro-

ther. Peggy Almond, who has been with me for some time, first made the remark. I knew that she had been sighing for a husband, of late, with more fervour than usual ; and I am not ill pleased that she has fixed her fancy on young Clifford. I heartily wish her success, from the love I bear the young lady, and her starched friend, the chaste Diana. I hope she will not be caught in her own snare, as, I strongly suspect she was, when she made the same attempt on Mr. Mordaunt. Of this, however, I would give a considerable sum to be fully ascertained. After their connection, of whatever nature it had been, seemed to be entirely broken, I endeavoured, by all the means I could devise, to draw a confirmation of my suspicions from him : I took particular care to inform him of a striking instance of Mrs. Demure's malice against himself, hoping that, in return, he would give me the satisfaction I wished for ; not that I expected a downright avowal, but I did expect that, in the usual way with fine gentlemen, he would

deny and reject the imputation in such a manner as would leave no doubt of its truth. I must acknowledge that I was completely disappointed ; and, if I had nothing to form a judgment from, but what was to be gathered from the words and behaviour of Mordaunt, I should be obliged to conclude that my suspicions were unfounded.

Mrs. Demure's own conduct, however, has, in particular circumstances, added strength to my suspicions ;—as often as the galled part is touched, she winces. At my instigation, lady Blunt rubbed it lately a little too roughly. She could hardly refrain from screaming. But all this forms no clearer proof than exists against numbers who are still classed among the upright.—I am more solicitous than ever to obtain proof positive. I wait with impatience for Mordaunt's return to town. I am resolved to put him once more to the question, and with such address as may, perhaps, squeeze the truth from him before he is aware of my intention.

In the course of my researches after this *village*, I have been informed that he was caught on the continent by a French woman, with whom he came to England,—a madame la marquise de—something or other;—for every Frenchman to be met with now-a-days is a nobleman, generally one who has forfeited a great estate; and every French woman is a duchess, a marchioness, or a countess at least. Notwithstanding the havoc made by the revolution among the nobility of France, I am assured that more French people, with titles, are to be found in the different countries of Europe, at present, than were in France before the emigration began. The lady whom Mordaunt has imported, I hear, is very handsome, and wonderfully elegant in her manners. That she has something *piquant* in her appearance I readily believe, since Mordaunt has showed her so much attention; but as for what they call elegance, I dare swear it is nothing but that pert address and friskiness of manner which French women

almost universally have. Be that as it may, I fancy Mordaunt begins to be tired of her ; for, after roving about town a little with his friend Travers, they set out suddenly for Rose-Mount, on the pretext that my lord was ill and impatient to see his brother. The true reason, I am convinced, was to get quit of the French woman. You know he is the most volatile bird of passage that ever fluttered among females. During his absence, the marchioness, as they call her, went in search of consolation from her countrymen, the emigrants, at Richmond, which swarms with them. There is nothing but French croaked there : the town is a complete rookery.

I have hardly seen Deanport since he received the last rebuff from the lady. During the short time I was with him, I took no notice of it. He seemed horribly out of humour. As his silly grief for the disappointment weakens, indignation will kindle. This may be turned to good account ; but nothing

must be attempted as yet. You had best not write to him, while he is in his present humour. I will inform you of more soon.

Meanwhile, I am, &c.

E. DEANPORT.



LETTER LXXXVIII.

The Same to the Same.

London.

I was entertained with your countryman's penetration, who perceived the reciprocal friendship and cordiality that exists between Mrs. Demure and me. There was a time, however, when I had a sincere friendship for that woman, and she then was at infinite pains to make me believe that she had the same for me. I never uttered a sentiment, in her hearing, which I was not immediately told corresponded with hers. You would have imagined we thought with the same soul. I took more pleasure in her company than in that of any other woman. Nothing could be more obliging, more accommodating, more agreeable, in all respects, than the whole of her behaviour. It was then—Your ladyship's superior understanding—your ladyship's ac-

wishes to promote the plan of marriage between her and Mr. Clifford, so that there are considerable hopes of its succeeding. You cannot imagine how delightfully Peggy takes off the amorous widow, and turns her into ridicule. I shall never part with this girl. Some of my acquaintance accuse her of being deceitful, and of being an habitual liar. Both accusations, I believe, are pretty well founded: she is capable of deceiving most people, and she is given to lying to all the world, except to myself; but she never tells a lie to me.

Though I now dislike Mrs. Demure in a far greater degree than I ever loved her, and there is a considerable diminution of our intimacy, yet I have endeavoured to preserve the *appearance* of my former attachment, and was willing to have continued to live with her in a state of polite mutual hatred to the end of the chapter, without attempting to disturb or to do her any mischief, farther than by my wishes, which it is not in my power

to controul, had she not provoked me, more than ever, by the insulting, impertinent, and ironical manner in which she announced miss Clifford's having rejected the hand of my son. As my desire was, that this marriage should not take place, you will think that the intelligence ought naturally to have given more satisfaction than her impertinent manner of communicating it could give pain ; you, with a manly arrogance, will assert, that to feel otherwise is contrary to reason, and feeling like that weak creature *woman*, but would be quite unworthy of that mighty rational being *man*.—So continue to think ; but allow me, wife sir, to be convinced that the latter is by much the silliest, most capricious, inconsistent animal, of the two : of which I could give many proofs if I had time ; but at present I can only tell you, that if you think what is supposed above, you are quite ignorant of what is natural. I acknowledge that I find the inciience and mockery of a person, who used to fawn upon me like a spaniel, more in-

wishes to promote the plan of marriage between her and Mr. Clifford, so that there are considerable hopes of its succeeding. You cannot imagine how delightfully Peggy takes off the amorous widow, and turns her into ridicule. I shall never part with this girl. Some of my acquaintance accuse her of being deceitful, and of being an habitual liar. Both accusations, I believe, are pretty well founded: she is capable of deceiving most people, and she is given to lying to all the world, except to myself; but she never tells a lie to me.

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tolerable, and that it excites stronger resentment, than even her forming a serious plan against my interest. Besides, this woman has given herself some very sublime airs of late on another subject, and is as provoking with her cant about virtue as lady Diana Franklin with her conduct. For those reasons, I heartily wish her married to Mr. Clifford.

This again, in the depth of your reasoning, you will reckon unnatural.—What ! to punish the woman you hate, will you promote her marriage with the man she loves ? And can you ask the question with surprise,—you who are acquainted with so many miserable couples, all of whom married from what they called love ? What severer punishment could I wish to two of my greatest enemies, of different sexes, and incompatible tempers, than that they should be married together, however desirous both may be of the union. Should it take place, depend upon it, this will be the fate of the couple in question.

I have made you acquainted with the one, and I am told that the other is one of the most passionate men alive.

Another reason, that has considerable weight in making me desirous of the accomplishment of that alliance, is, that I know it will vex and mortify lady Diana and miss Clifford; by which I shall have the satisfaction of seeing two women mortified who have frequently mortified me; especially if I can by any means get to the bottom of Mrs. Demure's affair with Mordaunt, which at present, I have reason to think, neither of them believe. And if, notwithstanding their incredulity on that subject, they dislike the connection, I leave you to imagine what their abhorrence will be, when the refined sentimental widow's intrigue shall be made manifest.

I cannot express the pleasure I should take in wishing the chaste goddess, and her favourite nymph, joy of their virtuous relation.

Until I have the pleasure of enjoying their confusion at some such *persiflage*, I shall think

myself in Mrs. Demure's debt for the insulting sarcastic manner in which she told me miss Clifford had *rejected* my son, and for the pleasure she evidently takes in whatever she thinks will give me pain. Until then, also, I shall consider myself as the debtor of the other two ladies, for various articles which I am impatient to clear off.

I desire that you will not imagine that I neglect any opportunity of re-establishing you on a good footing with my son : depend on it I am as anxious for that as you can be : but he is not to be spoken to as yet ; he is still in all the horrors of disappointment, and has not as yet been able to digest the repulse. I intend to enter on the subject with him soon. I have a particular plan in view :---you shall hear of it in my next.

Yours, &c.

E. DEANPORT.

LETTER LXXXIX.

From the Same to the Same.

London.

AFFAIRS wear a more favourable aspect :— the wheel of fortune, which has of late rolled so much against your wishes, now begins to turn in a contrary direction. Notwithstanding the mad perseverance which miss Clifford displayed in refusing the addresses of my son, I was not without fear that, after her fit of enthusiastic arrogance should be over, she would return to her senses. I therefore watched for a proper opportunity of conversing with him. He had anxiously avoided meeting me from the moment he determined to make the abject proposal of marriage ; and he had been so mean as to employ the brother to negociate for him ; and even wrote a penitential letter to her, after she had quarrelled with her brother on his

account. She returned that letter unopened. I heard him stamping and swearing in his own apartment after it was brought back to him.

I entered, and told him at once, that though he had endeavoured to keep it concealed from me, I knew the cause of his disquietude, and expressed much concern. “I must feel for every thing which gives you affliction, my dear Deanport,” said I, “whether, in other respects, I should think it to be regretted or not.”

I never, indeed, had seen him so mortified.—After some minutes of gloomy silence, he broke out into a fresh fit of fury; and, observing me to look at the returned letter which lay on the table,—“She has had the insolence,” exclaimed he, “to send back my letter unopened.”

Throwing up my eyes, in seeming amazement, I declared, “I never had heard of any thing equal to it.—This creature,” added I, “must assuredly have a great deal of pride.”

“She shall find, however,” resumed he,

with a vindictive look, "that she had better have exhibited less of it to me."

"There is, besides, something in her conduct," rejoined I, "which pride does not account for; for she certainly seemed to favour your addresses at one period;—What could be her drift then?"

"Her drift was to draw me on," exclaimed he. "She is the errantest jilt in Christendom."

"Draw you on to what?" said I. "She refuses to be your wife."

"Draw me on to make the proposal," cried he. "She wished to have it to boast that she rejected me."

"It will not be believed," said I.

"But I know it to be true," rejoined he, with a furious grimace; "and she shall suffer for her insolence."

"It is certainly in your power to make her suffer," said I, "and most severely, if that would afford you any satisfaction."

“ It would afford me the greatest.”

“ Then you have only to marry miss Moyston. You will at once be one of the most opulent peers of the realm ; miss Clifford will be universally ridiculed as an idiot ; and, with all her pride, will break her heart with vexation.”

“ Do you think so ?”

“ I am certain of it. You will have the pleasure of seeing her pine to a shadow, and expire like a bad actress in a tragedy, with all the world laughing at her.”

On this he swore he would recommence his addresses to miss Moyston without loss of time ; and begged that I would use all my influence with the aunt, that the marriage might be concluded as soon as possible.”

This I agreed to with alacrity ; for, though I had been under the necessity of avoiding any meeting with those ladies for some time, I had not the smallest doubt of

being able to explain my conduct to their satisfaction, and of having every thing arranged to my wish in a very short time.

This affair being now in a prosperous train, I must just observe, that the longer I live in the world, and reflect on what passes, the more am I confirmed in my system, that the success of the most important affairs depends on the person who has the direction of them being in good or ill luck; for which reason, if I were a sovereign, I would much rather choose a lucky man for my minister than a wise one; and yet you, my good sir, and others of your sagacious sex with whom I am acquainted, insist that there is no such thing as chance, not even in play; and, in spite of repeated experience, persist in keeping the losing seats, and betting on people who are in a run of ill luck, merely because they are good players. I remember lord Cardon, who is a man of wit, as well as a good player, was once my partner at whist. After the cards were cut, I regretted that we had not taken the win-

ning-seats, and asked his lordship, "Why he had not reminded me of it in time?" "Because," said he, "although I am an old man, I do not choose to be thought an old woman; which your ladyship is in no danger of," he added. This was applauded as a shrewd observation: the consequence, however, was, that we lost the rubber, on which I had a bet of fifty pounds extraordinary. Your men of wit may say what they please, but they will never convince me that it is not better to be lucky than either witty or wise.

Without drawing proofs of this from the experience of gamesters, do you not see that all the prudent pains I took to alienate the affections of lord Deanport from miss Clifford, and to prevail on him to marry miss Moyston, were ineffectual? and now the one has happened, and the other is on the point of taking place, through occurrences in which I had no hand. Depend upon it, luck is every thing; and, as it seems to be much against you at present,—for you

see, my good sir, that nothing you propose or undertake succeeds,—my advice to you is, to remain quite passive: do not so much as write a single line to my son: intermeddle with nothing, until the run, which is so terribly against you, shall be over;—for ill-luck does blow over, at last, just like a storm. When that takes place, and when the quiet possession of miss Moyston's fortune shall have put my son in good-humour, I am convinced he will see your conduct towards him in a fair light, and be inclined to do something handsome for you. In the mean time I repeat my advice, that you remain perfectly inactive; for, at present, the least movement on your part might ruin every thing.

I am, &c.

E. DEANPORT.

LETTER XC.

JAMES GRINDILL, *Efq. to the Countess of
DEANPORT.*

Hamburg.

I AM entirely of your ladyship's opinion, that it is better to be lucky than wise. I begin to think, indeed, that none but fools prosper. It has been said—"That money is the origin of evil."—Without agreeing to that adage, I acknowledge that the devil has a principal hand in the distribution of it. He himself, however, passes for having a great deal of wit: how far that is true I know not; but I daily see proofs of his having two qualities, in common with the generality of wits; namely, a hatred to other wits, and a partiality for dunces. He resembles some men of distinguished wit in another particular; having himself, by all accounts, been remarkably unfortunate.

For my own part, I have no reason to compassionately him under his misfortunes ; for, whoever the demon is who has the distribution of good and bad fortune, it is but too evident, that, though I have no great pretensions to be a wit, he has shown little kindness to me.

So far from having met with any of those lucky hits by which so many of his favourites are raised to opulence, I have missed several very promising opportunities of augmenting my fortune, by some cursed incident or other, which none but the devil could have produced.

Your ladyship will remember our dismal speculation in the funds, when the most judicious politicians were persuaded they were falling to the very devil ; yet, by a rebound that no force but his could have given, they suddenly rose, almost to my utter ruin, and to your very great inconveniency.

As your ladyship passed the ensuing season

in the country, you may never have heard that, in my distress, I had the desperate intrepidity to pay my addresses to a widow from the West Indies, enriched by the spoils of three husbands. I attended her to all public places, and was in high hopes of being made her fourth, when, as the devil would have it, I was seized with the lum-bago; and, when I was confined to my chamber, she happened to go to a masque-rade with a party, among whom was a tall officer of dragoons, who had formed an acquaintance with her during my confinement. This gentleman, having heard her praise the Highland-dress, as equally graceful and com-modious, took care to be arrayed in it at the masquerade, attached himself particularly to her the whole night; and, to my infinite disappointment, was married to her before I could walk abroad.

But what need is there of enumerating these, and other instances of my ill-fortune,

when the recent one of my being cut out of the Welsh estate is so well known to your ladyship?

That miserable business is continually tormenting me, with the aggravating circumstance of my having brought it on myself; for I never can forget that, poor as he was, the young artist at Dresden never solicited me to recommend him. What could tempt me to do it? I have seen many of those artists starving in London, without ever thinking of being of the least service to any of them. I should certainly have behaved with equal indifference to Evans, had not Satan suggested to me, that, by recommending him to my countrymen, I should recommend myself to Phillips: so that I really am not much to blame. I acted on the same principles that many, who pass for prudent men, act every day.

You see, my dear lady Diana, that, like other unfortunate people, I would willingly shift the cause of my misfortunes from my-

self to another ; but, in spite of all my endeavours to heave all this burden from my own shoulders to those of Satan, enough of it remains to disturb my conscience and recollection to such a degree, that, instead of explaining how this letter comes to be dated from Hamburg, I have spent all this time in lamentations for what cannot be helped. I will now inform your ladyship, that the same tormenting thought engrossed me so much while I was in England, that I entirely forgot a note for £.1500, which I gave A—— when we settled our Newmarket accounts, immediately before he went to the East Indies. I was in hopes that he would lose it, or entirely forget such a trifle, when he arrived there. He had left it, however, with an attorney ; and having lately met with some losses at play, which prevented his making a remittance that was expected, he sent orders to his agent to insist on immediate payment.

On receiving your ladyship's letter, giving me an account of the new and unexpected

turn which lord Deanport's business had taken, and that the absurd pride of miss Clifford had effected what the consideration of his own interest, and your ladyship's prudent suggestions had failed in producing, I became extremely uneasy on account of certain sneers at miss Moyston's person and manners which had escaped me in a letter to his lordship, written when I was persuaded that he had for ever renounced that lady, and was firmly attached to miss Clifford. However facetious those sarcasms might have seemed, had he married miss Clifford, I was sensible they would appear in a different light if he became the husband of miss Moyston. I became even afraid, that, through that carelessness so natural to his lordship, this letter might fall into her hands after she was lady Deanport.

I immediately set about composing a new letter, in which, after entreating him to burn the former, I endeavoured to explain away

all its acrimony, and to twist every sarcastic expression into a meaning favourable to miss Moyston. This was one of the most arduous tasks I ever imposed on myself: yet, when finished, I was so well pleased with the performance, that I directly sent it to his lordship. Next morning my hopes of its efficacy were not so sanguine. My anxiety, lest it should not prove entirely satisfactory, increased every hour; and I, at last, determined to leave my affairs in Wales unsettled, and go directly to London, on purpose to see that cursed letter burned, and explain every thing by word of mouth. I was also impatient to pay my court, as soon as possible, to miss Moyston. Nothing but my extreme solicitude, not to be misunderstood by his lordship, could have prevailed on me to do this, after your ladyship's having desired me, in your last, to remain passive.

On the very evening of my arrival in London, I was informed that a writ had been

issued against me, and that I should be arrested, unless I could pay the note above mentioned, or find security for the money.

In this emergency, finding that your ladyship had gone to Windsor, where you were to remain two days, I wrote to lord Deanport, informing him of my situation, and begging him, in the most pressing terms, to come to the hotel, as I could not venture abroad. In case he could not immediately advance the money, I told him, that I was convinced the attorney would be satisfied with his security ; and I pledged my word of honour that I would relieve his lordship in less than three months. I concluded with felicitations on his approaching marriage with miss Moyston, which, I said, would fix his lordship's happiness on the most solid basis, and make him envied by the most prosperous nobleman in England, and infallibly drive lord Sordid to despair.

Your ladyship will be shocked with the answer.—

“ My Dear Sir,

“ I am extremely sorry for your unfortunate situation ; and though, being well acquainted with your punctuality, I might rely on your word of honour, yet, as it is not in my power to comply with your request, to trouble you with a visit is unnecessary.

“ I am, dear sir,

“ Your most humble servant,

“ DEANPORT.

“ P.S. I wonder you do not apply to *your friend* Miss Moyston, of whom you have given so flattering a description in your letter from Wales.”

Behold the return I received for all the services I have rendered his lordship !

In this dreadful emergency, I had no other resource but to set out for Portsmouth directly. The only piece of good fortune I have met with, since my arrival in England, was the finding a vessel ready to carry me out

of it. I had but slender resources, as your ladyship will readily believe, on my arrival at Hamburg ; however, I put the best face on matters that I could ; yet the very first banker I applied to hesitated about the security I offered. I assumed a behaviour which I have sometimes found to succeed.

“ Pray, friend,” said I, with an air of astonishment and indignation, “ have you any kind of doubt of the goodness of this bill ?”

“ I confess, sir,” replied he, “ I have.”

“ Let me tell you, friend,” said I, “ that those who are the most capable of cheating are the most suspicious of being cheated.”

“ I give you credit, sir,” said he, “ for the observation, which I believe to be, in general, just.”

Deceived by the calm good-humoured air with which he spoke, I replied—“ I presume, then, you will discount the bill.”

“ By no means,” said the phlegmatic scoundrel.—“ I gave you credit for your observation, because, as I already told you, I

think it good.—I give none to the bill, because, as I also informed you before, I fear it is bad."

This man's diffidence spread like wild-fire, and infected every person to whom I applied for money.

From the contents of your ladyship's last letter, I take it for granted that my lord is now in lawful possession of miss Moyston, or on the point of being so. I leave it to your prudence and address to seize a favourable opportunity of showing him the unreasonableness of his being offended with me on account of what I wrote respecting miss Moyston. So far from its being meant as disrespectful to him, it was, in reality, exactly conformable to what I had reason to believe were his own sentiments. The letter he wrote to me, I am willing to think, was merely the effect of a transient fit of passion, to which the most amiable people are the most liable. I cannot allow myself to imagine that your ladyship will have any difficulty in convincing him of

the sincerity of my attachment to him and to all who are connected with him ; yet I would have you to watch a proper occasion for making the representation. Perhaps this may not occur immediately after his nuptials. It is not likely that his lordship will then be in the most auspicious humour. It will be best to let him be, in some measure, familiarised to miss Moyston, and consoled for what he may not relish in her person, by reflecting on the beauties of her fortune.

I must likewise trouble your ladyship to make my congratulations agreeable to that lady.—Assure her that nobody can have a more sincere respect for the young countess of Deanport than I shall always have.

I should have been reduced to the greatest difficulties had I not received a supply from one of our countrymen who arrived last night at the inn. I was very little acquainted with him, yet found myself under the necessity of making my situation known to him.—“ I had the honour to mee. ‘ ou, sir,’ said he,

" in company with Mr. Mordaunt—A companion of his must be a man of honour." He advanced the supply I had applied for.— But I shall not leave this place until I hear from your ladyship.

I remain,

Your devoted servant,

J. GRINDILL.

LETTER XCI.

*The Countess of DEANPORT to JAMES
GRINDILL, Esq.*

London.

AFTER all the instances of the devil's malice, and of your own ill-luck, that you enumerated in your last, you are unacquainted with one which exceeds all the rest. In consequence of the advice I gave my son, when he was in the very height of his fury against miss Clifford, he determined, as I informed you, to renew his addresses to miss Moyton.

He had long been persuaded that the poor girl was over head-and-ears in love with him, and that she was in a state of languishment from the suspense he had so long kept her in. He once hinted to me, "that, though he seldom had any compassion for ugly women, yet he could not help pitying her a little ;" and, when I represented to him "that his mar-

riage with miss Moyston would not only completely avenge him of miss Clifford, but be matter of triumph over lord Sordid,— “ True,” said he; “ but you do not mention what, I acknowledge, affords me some satisfaction; namely, that it would be the means of saving the life of miss Moyston: as her death *before marriage* would afflict me deeply.”

He had hardly uttered this benevolent speech, when a letter was delivered to me from my loving friend Mrs. Demure, expressing her sorrow and astonishment at a piece of news she had just heard, *that miss Moyston was actually married to lord Sordid.* “ Her sorrow,” she said, “ arose from her believing that lord Deanport had views on that lady, and her astonishment from the lady’s having preferred lord Sordid.” She insisted on the excessive pain this news gave her, with a profusion of expressions, which sufficiently showed how delighted she was; and begged, “ that, if I knew it to be false,

I would be so good as to send her a line, to relieve her from the uneasiness she was in.” This convinced me that she thoroughly believed it to be true.—I shall, perhaps, find some occasion of addressing an epistle of the same obliging nature to Mrs. Demure.

I gave this letter to my son, ordered my carriage, and drove directly to miss Moyerston’s ; where I was informed that she and her aunt were both in the country, where they had been several days ; and I did not return home until I was informed, from the best authority, that Mrs. Demure’s news was perfectly well-founded.

My son’s rage was without bounds : indeed it was manifested in such a ridiculous manner, that it put an end to mine. You may call us, as you please, the *weaker* sex ; but it appears every hour more clear, that women, in general, have stronger minds than men, and that they know their own minds better. What capricious girl could act more inconsistently than my son, in the whole of this business ?

He shows coldness and indifference towards an object of the greatest importance while it is in his power, and he falls into a fit of rage as soon as it is out of his power. He hardly does any thing from reason or reflection ; his whole conduct is guided by whim : yet he laughs at the caprice of the female character, and values himself on his manly firmness. When he once forms a resolution, he asserts that it is not to be shaken.

I remember his ordering his horses one morning at Willow-Park, in the intention to call on a gentleman who lived at eight miles distance. “ As it begins to rain, my lord,” said I, “ you had best go in a carriage.” —“ No,” he said, “ he had already ordered his horses, and would keep his resolution.” He hates, above all things, to ride in rain ; and he looked at the sky every ten minutes during four hours, in the hopes that the rain would abate.—It increased every minute.—“ If you had taken your carriage,” said I, “ you would have been back by this time ;

now, you must either go in a carriage, or abandon all thought of the visit you intended this day."

"I am not to be shaken from my purpose, like a woman," said he ; and, after this civil speech, he heroically mounted his horse, rode off in the middle of a heavy rain, and caught rheumatisms which confined him a month, to prove that he was of a steady character, and wiser than his mother.

How men could ever imagine that they were in general less subject to caprice, or of a more steady character, than women, I could never discover. I could almost leave this question to be decided by you, though a party concerned. When a husband is of one opinion, and his wife of another, lay your hand to your heart, and declare which is the most likely to remain steady. To the best of my remembrance, among all my acquaintance, the husbands who seem to me the most prudent, and who pass their lives in the greatest

tranquillity, are precisely those who acquiesced in their wives' opinion.

Perhaps you will not admit this; yet I could put you in mind of many occasions, on which it would have been good for you yourself to have followed a woman's advice, instead of your own.

In my very last letter, as nothing seemed to prosper in which you at all intermeddled, I advised you to remain quite passive, and by no means to address a single line to my son. Instead of following my counsel, you thought proper to write a letter to him, the length of which alone would have determined him not to comply with the contents; for you might have known that he hates long letters, and detests their composers. But the purport of this letter, you say, was to explain away the sarcasms, in a former letter, against miss Moyston, to make an eulogium on that accomplished lady, and expatiate on my son's happiness in obtaining such a prize.

Now what marks the invincible run of ill fortune against you, more than all the misfortunes which have hitherto happened to you, is, that this horrid letter was delivered to my son after he had heard that lord Sordid had obtained the lady's hand, when he was in the very act of cursing her, had exhausted all the opprobrious epithets he could recollect, and would have blessed any one who could have furnished him with a new execration. But when he came to that part of your letter where you praise miss Moyston more particularly for the virtue of constancy, and for preferring him to all the nobility of England, his fury was turned from her against you.

I will not shock you with a repetition of the horrid things he pronounced :—I must say, however, that your recantation never could have come at a more unlucky moment ; though, indeed, all moments seem to be equally unlucky for you. I should be sorry to be thought superstitious ; but it cannot be called

superstition to make observations on events as they occur ; this is the only way in which we can profit by experience. Now, one observation, which I cannot avoid making, is, that I began to lose my money at play precisely after your arrival in England, and my ill fortune continued, without interruption, all the time I corresponded with you while you were in Wales.

A second observation, equally true, is, that I won a considerable sum the very day after your sailing from Portsmouth, and I continued to win until the night of the day on which I received your last letter, and then my ill-luck returned. What inference can be drawn from these remarks, but that some fatality attends you, which comprehends not only your personal concerns, as in your affair with the West-India widow, and that of your Welsh relation, but also extends to all those with whom you are in correspondence.

You will ask, no doubt, What connection

can there be between your being in England, or your corresponding with me, and my losing at cards.

That is a question which I do not attempt to answer :—the fact is, that I *do* lose my money when you come to England, and I win as soon as you sail away. I have heard you yourself remark, that experience was a surer guide than theory. Here is long-continued experience all going to warn me against any communication with you, for a considerable period at least. You are too reasonable, therefore, to condemn the resolution I have formed of interrupting all correspondence with you, until there shall be cause to think that this malignant influence, fatality, or whatever else it may be called, has entirely left you ; and, if you should attempt to transmit any letter to me before that period, you will be justly thought as criminal as if, knowing yourself to have the plague, you should thrust yourself into the company of uninfected persons ; for, really, I know little

difference between one who is wilfully the cause of my losing every sixpence I have in the world, and one who sends me out of the world altogether.

You are at some pains to prove that your misfortunes may, perhaps, be owing to some extraordinary spite, that the demon, who distributes good and bad fortune, has against *you* in particular. I confess I do not think that conjecture at all probable: why should you suspect, my dear sir, that the devil should have a particular spite against you? I know nothing you have ever done to offend him. Yet, after all, if that should be the case, you must admit that it forms an additional reason for my interrupting all farther correspondence with you; for, although I do not wish to cultivate an intimacy with him, yet I will avoid every thing that can have the appearance of braving him; for, as it is impossible to know what may happen, it would be the height of imprudence to make enemies unnecessarily. As

soon, however, as I perceive any disposition in lord Deanport to serve you, which I own is far from being the case at present, I shall encourage him in it by every prudent means in my power.

Till then I remain yours, &c.

E. DEANPORT.

P.S. It just occurs to me, that, although there is no denying that men's fortune often depends on fortunate accidents, yet it is equally true, that, in spite of the devil, fortunate accidents throw themselves oftener in the way of men of consummate address than of fools.—This gives me hopes that you will stumble on something of that nature soon.

LETTER XCII.

Miss Horatia Clifford to Lady Diana Franklin.

MY DEAR LADY DIANA,

London.

THIS will free you from part of the apprehensions you express in your last letter on my brother's account. I had a great reliance on his natural fickleness ; and now there is reason to believe that my reliance was well founded. My brother has set out for Northumberland, in spite of all the blandishments of Mrs. Demure—I believe I might have said, partly *because* of them—her affiduities became oppressive.

I not only rejoice that he is gone, but also on account of the motives that determined him to go. He became anxious to make certain arrangements, for the purpose of raising money to clear off his debts, and particularly that which he owes lord Deanport :

which, I find, bears harder on his spirit than all the rest. Lord Deanport is pressed for money himself. You have heard, no doubt, that miss Moyston is now the wife of lord Sordid. That young man was considered as a miser, even when he was poor : I leave you to judge how much more so he is likely to become now that he is immensely rich. I once heard my father say, that a real miser acquires nothing by an accession of money, but a constant dread of losing it.

Miss Moyston's marriage took place at the very time when lord Deanport, in compliance with the prudent remonstrances of his mother, had determined to renew his addresses to that lady. My brother, knowing he has met with this disappointment, is become more impatient to clear off the debt he owes his lordship.

William is so irritated against me, that it would be vain for me to attempt any friendly explanation with him at present ; but the measures he is now adopting give me hopes

that he will be in a better disposition soon,—which is what I most earnestly wish. You cannot imagine how painful it is for me to be on an unfriendly footing with him.

I have written to Mr. Proctor, begging that he would forget my brother's former harsh behaviour, and meet him with his usual goodness; assuring him, that William has the highest opinion of his integrity (which I am sure he has), and will follow his advice respecting the renewal of the leases that are nearly expired, (which I hope he will do).

I beg at the same time that he will advance the money that my brother stands in immediate need of, on my security, without letting William know that I am any way connected in the business. It would grieve me very much to see any part of the old family estate sold. I am in great hopes that the difficulties William has experienced of late will make him more prudent and economical. A few years economy would still

clear the estate of all incumbrances. It would be more difficult to purchase back any part of the land, if once sold. Besides, I consider it as a species of sacrilege to sell any part of so very ancient an inheritance.

I spend a great part of my time with the marchioness, who returned to town some days ago. She often talks to me of her husband. She seems to rejoice in the good fortune that has lately befallen them, more on his account than her own; and speaks of him in a strain of such affection, as gives me a higher notion of the happiness of the married state than I had. If they had lived together in a state of uninterrupted prosperity, would they have been as fond of each other? would they have been as happy as they are?—I question it.—They would have occasionally felt that cold forgetfulness of each other, which those who are called the happiest married people sometimes experience. The marchioness (and she is convinced it is the same with her husband) knows none

of that. The storms, which for a time separate their persons, unite their souls more affectionately. Each can say with truth to the other,

“ When howling winds and beating rain,
In tempests shake the fylvan cell ;
Or midst the chase, in every plain,
The tender thought on thee shall dwell.”

Although I know, my dear lady Diana, that you think some of my notions romantic, I have come to the resolution to conceal none of them from you, however absurd they may appear. You cannot imagine how very insipid and tiresome I feel that course of life with which so many people seem satisfied. I never saw so much of it as since Juliet went to the North, and you to Devonshire. Can any thing be more flat and unprofitable, than for nearly the same circle to meet day after day, without the least sentiment of affection or esteem, without any desire of information, without any bond of union, except that arising from repaying dinner by dinner, assembly by assembly, having the

same need of cards, and being able to afford to play at the same stake? They meet, however, almost every evening, with smiles on their countenances, indifference, or perhaps hatred in their hearts, inquire after the state of each other's health, without listening to the answer, or caring whether the person whose health they inquire after be dead or alive.—“Pray,” said I to your friend the general, whom I met at a numerous assembly, “are those people happy?”

“Happy!” answered he; “not in the least.”

“What brings them here, then?” said I.

“They come here,” answered he, “or go elsewhere, in hopes of being less *unhappy* than at home.”

Yet some of those I had pointed to were newly-married people.—Mr. and Mrs. Resource, who were married last week, entering at that instant—“Is not that couple happy?” said I to the general.

" Far from it," replied he ; " you will see him leave the assembly directly."

" Why did he marry the poor woman ?" said I.

" Because," replied the general, " the poor woman has fortune sufficient to enable her husband to live very comfortably without her."

The marchioness and her husband, in spite of the dangers and difficulties they have been exposed to, I am persuaded have had more happiness in their married state than those couples who pass a long life of joyless opulence and insipid security, accompanied with mutual indifference."

Adieu ! my dear lady Diana.

H. CLIFFORD.

LETTER XCIII.

*The Honourable JOHN MORDAUNT to Colonel
SOMMERS.*

London.

I waited on the marchioness the day after my arrival in town, and was happy to find her in good spirits. She has received comfortable accounts from her husband, and has been passing her time agreeably in the society of her own country-people at Richmond. When she informed me of this, she repeated from Ossian, and her foreign accent rendered it more affecting—*Often did the memory of former times come, like the evening sun, on my soul.*—I was a little surprised to find the marchioness acquainted with the poems of Ossian. She told me she had a great relish for them; and that this was no unusual thing among the lovers of poetry in her country. People of the most cheerful disposition some-

times have a taste for imagery of the most melancholy nature ; but, I believe, the reverse hardly ever happens. The poems of Ossian, however, are translated into French, Italian, and German, and much more admired in some of those countries than in England.

After my first visit to the marchioness, I was so much engaged, and so often obliged to make short visits to the country, that I did not wait upon her again for some time.

I went, however, pretty early in the forenoon, two days ago, to her lodgings, ordering my horses to follow within half an hour ; for I intended to take a pretty long ride, with a view to recover my spirits, of which, for several days and nights, I had made too lavish an expenditure. I had thoughts of going as far as the cottage, in hopes of hearing something of the *incognita*, whose beauty still floated before my eyes in nightly dreams and daily visions. I saw her airy figure this very morning, at sun-rise, as I contemplated the

sky.—*Lovely is the mist, said I, that assumes the form of my Unknown**.

I was somewhat surprised at my own constancy. “She hangs on my fancy rather longer than usual,” thought I. “To render me constant, it is necessary, I suppose, that I should never see a second time, except in idea, the woman who fires my imagination.”

Occupied with such reflections, I arrived at the lodgings of the marchioness. I was told she was within, and desired to walk up stairs. The French servants, you know, do not always take the trouble of announcing visitors.

I tapped at the door of the room in which she usually sits. She had heard my voice, and called out—“Entrez, Entrez.”

When I opened the door—

“Il y a mille ans,” said she, “que je ne vous ai vu.”

“I must confess, madam, that”—

* Offian.

“ Ah !” said she, smiling, and interrupting me, “ Si c'est votre confession que vous allez me faire, parlez plus bas.”

“ Pourquoi donc ?”

“ C'est qu'il y a quelqu'un dans mon cabinet qui pourroit vous entendre.”

While she spoke, a young lady came from the inner-room ;—aye, and the handsomest young lady I ever saw.

“ Pfshaw !” you cry ; “ this is the old phrase. I have known you fond of a dozen women, each of whom was for a certain time, some longer, some shorter, the handsomest woman you ever saw ; but all of them, within a few months, appeared to you much like the rest of their sex.”

“ What you say, Sommers, has, I must confess, a good deal of truth in it ; and it is a melancholy truth, which sometimes gives me great uneasiness ; yet, I hardly believe I shall ever change my way of thinking, with respect to the lady now in question.”

“ Why should you not change your opinion respecting her, as well as respecting others ?”

“ Because this young lady, whom I saw at the marchioness’s, struck me more than any woman ever did ; and she *really* is the handsomest woman, without exception, that I did see.”

“ You said the same of the rest.”

“ I did so ; but, in the present instance, it is different ; because it is not so much her face, simply taken as a face, that strikes me ; but as it is connected with her person, which is elegant to the last degree.”

“ You admired the face and person of the *incognita* every bit as much, before you saw this last.”

“ Perhaps I might ; but, as you say, it was before I saw this other : besides, I had not time to examine the appearance of the *incognita*, she vanished so immediately :—whereas, I stayed a considerable time, and conversed a good deal, with this lady, at the marchio-

ness's. I had leisure to weigh and appraise her. I found the elegance of her manners, and the good sense of her conversation, equal to her other attractions :—and then, the melody of her voice rendered every thing delightful that she uttered. In short, taking her for all in all, I am certain I never beheld so fine a woman. No ; never did I see, in human form, any thing so pleasing, so beautiful, so !— But this, you will tell me, is too vague ; and were I, in the sublime language of Milton, to say—

“ Grace was in all her steps, heaven in her eye,
In every gesture dignity and love”—

still it would give no precise idea of the lady's face and person. I will therefore try to describe her a little more particularly. I must tell you, then, that she is but a very little taller than the marchioness, who, you know, is above the middle size.

“ Her hair, if that be an article of any importance when the fashion is for women to

wear perriwigs—her hair, I say, is of a beautiful dark colour, though not quite so dark as that of the marchioness, which, you know, is of a very dark brown.

“ Her teeth are every bit as white and regular as those of the marchioness : but I now recollect that you never saw the marchioness. However, you may depend upon it, that no teeth can be finer than those of this lady.

“ Her eyes are of a charming hazel ; which, in my opinion, is a much finer colour for eyes than either blue or black.

“ Her arms !—to talk of polished ivory and Parian marble—stuff ! On my soul, Sommers, I never saw such arms !—I will not attempt to describe the rest of her person ; but from all I could perceive, or could understand through the drapery, the whole is exquisite.”

“ I find, then, that, after all your fine flourishes and raptures about the *incognita*, that she is entirely superseded :—you think no more of her.”

"On the contrary, I think of nobody else."

"How do you mean?"

"Why, this *is* the *incognita*."

"The devil she is!"

"She is indeed, colonel."—But here I am interrupted. I shall tell you more in my next.

Adieu!—I beg to be respectfully remembered to your lady.

Yours, ever,

J. MORDAUNT.

LETTER XCIV.

The Same to the Same.

London.

I RESUME where I left off.—At sight of the lady, I was most delightfully surprised to recognise the features of the person I had been so long in search of: she also seemed a little surprised. The marchioness, who had been spoken to by a servant just as the lady and I first saw each other, did not observe the emotions of either. She continued to talk, sometimes addressing herself to the lady, and sometimes to me, till, perceiving that neither of us spoke, she stared first at one, then at the other; and, with playful gesture, sung the first line of a song she had caught from the ballad-singers under her window—“*Dear, dear, what can the matter be?*”

The lady smiled: but, before either of us spoke—“Pray,” resumed the marchioness,

" are you two acquainted with each other?"

I answered, " that I had had the pleasure of seeing the lady once before, and had ever since earnestly wished for the happiness of seeing her again."

The lady gently bowed; and the marchioness, in a gay manner, rejoined—" Well, I have often heard that the English were not a talkative nation, but I did not know before that their method of forming an acquaintance with one another was by keeping a profound silence when they met."

We both smiled; and the marchioness continued:—" If that be the case, I am persuaded you two will be on an intimate footing soon.

" I really suspected," resumed the marchioness, " that you were old acquaintance, who, having had a quarrel, met here accidentally, before it was made up. I was the more confirmed in my suspicion," continued she, addressing the lady, " because you were in high spirits before this gentleman

entered ; and as for him, he is never other-wife ; yet, the instant you set eyes on each other, you both became as melancholy and as dumb as two Carthusians."

" Depend upon it, my dear marchioness," said the lady, " that no woman could be more averse than I should be to making a vow of silence ; but, if I really had made such a vow, I should regret it less when you spoke, than at any other time."

" Vous êtes charmante !" cried the marchioness, embracing her. Then, turning to me, she added—" I have read, in some of your English books, that a French person always takes a compliment in the most favourable sense. I believe the author is in the right."

After this there were few intervals of silence. Sure no mortal ever possessed the art of banishing constraint, and putting people on an easy footing, in greater perfection, than this charming French woman.

As for the *incognita*, her conversation be-

came every moment more delightful. All her remarks were, in an uncommon degree, ingenious. Do not suspect that her ingenuity depends on her personal beauties, like your acquaintance, miss Blossom, whose reputation for wit stands upon her complexion and teeth. I do assure you, Sommers, that the general turn of this young lady's conversation would be thought ingenious by every person of taste, even though her features were as devoid of meaning as those of lady Carmine, who, while she was contemplating the Wax-work exhibition, was mistaken for one of the figures.

The *incognita* rose, at one time, to go ; but the marchioness prevailed on her to stay.

My horses had stood two hours before the door :—they might have stood two hours longer, had not the marchioness, with the same ease that she would have asked a pinch of snuff, said—“ I must beg of you, my dear sir, to be gone ; but, as you seem to be

disengaged to-day, I shall be happy to see you again in the evening—for *I give a tea.*”

It was my person alone that left the room : all the rest of me remained with the *incognita*, until Ben told me, “ that if I proceeded any farther at that slow pace, I should not have time to dress before dinner.” I then looked around, and found myself at Kew-bridge. I immediately returned to town, and remained at home, with a good deal of impatience, till eight, and then drove to the marchioness’s.

There I found by much the gayest assembly I have seen since I returned to England. It consisted entirely of emigrants, of both sexes ; some of them people of the first rank, accustomed from their infancy to magnificence and every luxury, yet accommodating themselves to their present circumstances with admirable equanimity. Good-humour and gaiety are always agreeable qualities :—by being preserved during adversity, they are ennobled into virtues.

I met with some whom I had known the first time I was at Paris, and to whom I owed many civilities. The attention due to them kept me from the reveries into which I every instant found myself ready to fall.

The marchioness asked me, in a whisper, “If I should ever forgive her for having inveigled me into a whole army of French?”

The answer was unavoidable—“I was obliged to her for introducing me to so many agreeable people.” “Yet,” resumed she, with a fly look, “you seem to expect somebody else, by your eye being so frequently directed to the door.”

After this I refrained from looking that way for some time; but, turning my eyes towards it at last, I saw the person they searched sitting between two French ladies, a cluster of men pressing around her. I moved that way—she received my compliment with politeness, and immediately resumed her conversation with those who sat next

her. I attempted frequently to draw her into a separate conversation : she always made a polite reply to what I said, but directly after addressed her discourse to some other of the company. I at length ventured to say, in English, “The French are a very agreeable people ; it is not, therefore, surprising that you are so fond of conversing with *them*.”

“Even if I were not very fond of conversing with *them*,” said she, smiling, “I should think it highly proper on the present occasion ; for, though it is an English custom, I do not think it quite polite, in the natives of a country, to converse apart, and leave foreigners to entertain themselves.”

“Here are more foreigners than natives,” said I. “That renders the deviation from politeness greater,” rejoined she.

“How so ?”

“Do you not perceive,” said she, “how very rude it would seem, in either of us, to prefer *one* single native to such a *choice* of foreigners ?”

"As for my own part," I resumed, "I can declare with truth that I prefer your"—

"We were speaking of politeness," said she, interrupting me, "which, you know, is quite a different thing from truth."

"I know it," said I, "and therefore, with truth, independent of politeness, declare, that I should give the same preference were the assembly composed of a select company of English women instead of foreigners."

"How would you look now," replied she, smiling, "if every woman to whom you have made a similar declaration overheard you?—But I am wanted," added she, and crossed the room to the marchioness, who immediately placed her in a card party.

By this time, my dear colonel, I suspect you are a little impatient to know who this *incognita* is?—Why, she is an acquaintance of yours—of mine. Yes, and the most intimate friend of your Juliet.

"Miss Clifford!"

Yes, to be sure. Who else could answer the description I have given ?

But now she is also an acquaintance of mine, and the only one who could detain me from setting out for Ashwood after the time mentioned in the note I sent on the day of my arrival in town. But I refer the matter, my dear Sommers, to your own conscience—Is such a woman to be left so very easily?—She allows me to visit her at Mr. Darnley's. We have had a long conversation about your Juliet and you. I do rejoice, my friend, in your happiness ;—long may it last ! I am to dine at Mr. Darnley's with the marchioness to-morrow ; and am engaged to dance with miss Clifford at a ball to be given by the countess of R—— some days after. She tells me, however, that her friend, lady Diana Franklin, is expected from Devonshire very soon. The marchioness and miss Clifford will go to meet her at the Grove whenever she arrives. I hinted that I should be happy to attend them, provided they would

engage to secure my welcome. Miss Clifford seemed to think this push rather too bold: she said, with a more severe air than I had ever before seen her assume, “that she believed lady Diana expected only the marchioness and herself.”

Have you no thoughts of bringing Mrs. Sommers to town? If you are determined against that step, I shall certainly be with you in Northumberland.—I cannot as yet fix the precise time—

This much I had written several days ago; but having been interrupted, I neglected to finish and send the letter to the post.—You see the state of mind I am in.—You ask what has become of all my protestations against marriage.—*Ah! le bon billet qu'a la châtre.*

Adieu !

J. MORDAUNT.

LETTER XCV.

*Lady DIANA FRANKLIN to Miss HORATIA
CLIFFORD.*

MY DEAR HORATIA,

Plimpton.

As there is a possibility of the marchioness being suddenly obliged to leave England, and join her husband, I am determined to set out for the Grove to-morrow. Mrs. Denham is by no means so much re-established as I wished and expected she would have been by this time ; yet I cannot bear the thought of allowing the marchioness to leave this island without my seeing her.

I have written to my housekeeper, that she may expect you and the marchioness at the Grove on Friday next, and desired her to have dinner for you by five o'clock. I expect to be there myself the same evening.

By several letters from her, I find that Mr. Mordaunt has been able to render her some essential services, and has impressed on her

heart a strong sense of obligation. I dare say she has mentioned this to you. The brilliant qualities of that gentleman are peculiarly captivating to young women: England cannot boast a man of a finer appearance, or more easy manners. He is said to possess qualities that command the admiration of his own sex in as great perfection as he does those which engage the affection of ours: his courage and acuteness of mind are highly celebrated. He is also considered as a man of wit; but wit, like other brilliant possessions, produces more envy in others than happiness to the proprietor. No quality, however, is more generally admired. I am not surprised, therefore, my dear, to perceive, through the guarded expressions in which you mention him in your last letter, that you view him with some degree of partiality.

I know no man, however, whose acquaintance is more dangerous to a young woman. And, even to those to whom the acquaintance of no man can be dangerous, any degree of

intimacy with him will not be thought very proper. His conversation is often more brilliant than sensible. He has always avowed a determination never to marry ; but it is said, that, with all his libertinism, he cannot be justly accused of ever having seduced any woman by *promising* her marriage. This is a kind of defence which, without entirely exculpating one party, leaves the other without excuse. You tell me that Mr. Darnley first met Mr. Mordaunt at the lodgings of the marchioness, and, being pleased with his conversation, invited him to his house, which he now visits pretty frequently ; and that both Mr. and Mrs. Darnley are delighted with his company. Mr. Mordaunt has the art of rendering his company agreeable to all whom he peculiarly wishes to please ; but I question much, my dear, whether Mr. and Mrs. Darnley would have been of that number, if he could freely enjoy *your* company without theirs. At all events, you may be very certain, that the world will

place Mr. Mordaunt's visits to your account more than to that of your uncle and aunt; and you will reflect, my dear Horatia, how far the frequent visits of a man of his way of thinking and character, either when you are at your uncle's or elsewhere, is proper for you.

On Friday evening I shall have the pleasure of embracing you and the marchioness at the Grove. Till then, my dear, adieu !

D. FRANKLIN.

P. S. I beg, my dear, that you will not fail to meet me at the Grove.—If any accident or engagement should prevent the marchioness from coming on Friday, come by yourself.

LETTER XCVI.

Colonel SOMMERS to Miss CLIFFORD.

Ashwood.

IT is with much concern, my dear miss Clifford, that I address this to you. I went last Wednesday to Mr. Kerr's, where my business detained me that night. On my return home, I found my dearest Juliet very much indisposed. Miss Proctor, who has been with us this month past, and your brother, who has been very assiduous in his visits since he last came to the country, dined with her. In the evening they walked out till the ladies were fatigued; then rested on a bank by the side of the rivulet, and returned by a shorter path, across the meadow, when it was quite wet with dew. Juliet was seized with a shivering that night, and was very feverish till morning. She made light of her indisposition, however, when I

arrived, and the physician gave me hopes that the fever was abating ; but she has passed a very disturbed night, has rambled a great deal in his sleep, and sometimes mentioned your name. She was calmer during some part of the forenoon ; but the physician speaks with less hope of the fever being thrown off immediately ; assuring me, at the same time, that there is no very threatening symptom. However unwilling I am to give you uneasiness, I have so often heard your sweet friend and you censure the concealing of intelligence of this nature from those nearest concerned, that I thought proper to communicate to you directly the real situation in which she is.

You, my dear madam, who know the value of the treasure I possess, may form a just idea of the anguish I feel at the least appearance of losing it. I was so strongly affected with certain thoughts which rushed into my mind after I had written the last sentence, that, instead of proceeding, I went

into Juliet's chamber. Her attendants made a signal for me to withdraw, and have since assured me that she has fallen into a slumber.

My mind is continually revolving scenes of past happiness, with the trembling hope that they will be renewed. When I heard, this morning, that Juliet had expressed a desire to see a clergyman, you cannot imagine how it pierced my heart: it gave me the idea that they never were to be renewed in this life. Some people's religion consists entirely in acts of devotion, and some entirely in acts of benevolence. As hers consists in both, it always afforded me pleasure, except in this single instance.—How weak!

I am

Your ever faithful friend and servant,

RICHARD SOMMERS.

LETTER XCVII.

Miss Horatia Clifford to Lady Diana Franklin.

MY DEAR LADY DIANA,

Ashwood.

IMMEDIATELY on receiving your last letter, I settled with the marchioness to set out together on Friday to meet you at the Grove ; but that same evening, while we were felicitating each other in the pleasure we expected from your society, I received a letter from colonel Sommers, with an alarming account of Juliet. The letter was evidently written in great agitation of mind : she had been suddenly taken ill, and was thought in danger. I ordered post-horses, with the intention of setting off that same night for Ashwood. My aunt exclaimed against my leaving town at that hour, and talked of robbers, &c. Mr. Darnley, perceiving this had no effect, told me plainly

that he would not allow me to leave his house till next morning. I was therefore a prisoner till five o'clock, when I set off with my maid, a servant attending us on horseback. I leave you to imagine my anxiety during this journey ; the earliest companion of my youth, the beloved friend of my heart, the favourite of my lamented mother, the woman on earth whom, next to yourself, I most love and esteem, on the point, as I dreaded, of being snatched from me for ever. Yet, so overpowered was I by the fatigue of incessant travelling, that, on the second day, I got some sleep in the carriage, and thereby found myself less exhausted than I probably should have been had I remained in London ; for in that case I certainly should have had no sleep at all. I was greatly relieved by the colonel, who, as he helped me out of the chaise, assured me that my friend was better. The physician gave me the same assurance ; but prevented my seeing her directly, as I earnestly desired. Some time after, however,

he came to me, and said, “ that he had been again with his patient, who had told him, that she had a dear friend in London, who would be greatly alarmed on hearing of her illness ; and had desired him, if he really thought her in a way of recovery, to write his opinion to that friend ; informing him at the same time of my address.

“ On my assuring her,” continued the physician, “ that I would do as she desired, she said, with fervour, ‘ O doctor ! you cannot imagine what comfort your letter will afford to her afflicted heart ; and it gives no small uneasiness to mine, that she must feel two days of painful apprehension before she receives it.’ On this,” added he, “ I desired her not to be uneasy on that account ; and informed her that you were actually in the house. And now, madam,” said he, taking me by the hand, “ permit me to conduct you to your friend’s bed-side.”

He led me into her chamber.—After a very short interview, the tenderness of which I am

unable to describe, the physician, addressing his patient, said — “ Now, madam, the thought of your friend’s vexation will no longer keep you awake. She needs sleep as much as you. The consolation I have afforded you both, though not exactly agreeable to regular practice, will, I hope, prove as efficacious an anodyne draught as any I could have ordered from the apothecary’s shop.”

So saying, he led me out of the room. I soon after went to bed with a light heart, slept eight hours, and, when I awakened, was informed that Juliet had also had a good deal of sleep, and continued on the recovery.

Those parts of your letter that relate to Mr. Mordaunt I delay taking notice of, because, until I shall be fully ascertained of Mrs. Sommers’s recovery, I cannot, for a moment, fix my mind on any other subject. This is also the case with the colonel. If any

thing could augment the esteem I before had for that gallant and worthy man, it would be the tender and delicate attentions he has paid to Juliet since her illness.

In him there is a remarkable proof of the difference between that kind of intrepidity which enables a man to preserve coolness and recollection in the midst of personal danger, and that which makes him bear the loss of a beloved object. No man ever displayed more of the former than colonel Sommers ; and no man is more a coward at the thought of the latter. I observed him become pale at the hurried entrance of Juliet's maid into the room where he and I were sitting this morning. She only wanted something of no importance ; but his agitated heart suggested an unfavourable turn in her mistress. He could hardly speak for some moments after the girl was gone.

I have strong hopes, that in my next I shall be able to announce the happy news

that Juliet is quite out of danger. With affectionate compliments to the marchioness, who, I take it for granted, is now with you at the Grove,

I am, my dear lady Diana,

Yours,

H. CLIFFORD.

P. S. My brother was almost constantly at Ashwood before my arrival : he has never been here since ; but he sends every day to inquire how Juliet is. His letters are never directed to me. I have certainly more reason to complain of him than he has of me ; yet I am the person that feels uneasiness at our misunderstanding :—this is foolish on my part, and hard-hearted on his.

LETTER XCVIII.

The Countess of Deanport to Mrs. Demure.

MY DEAR MADAM,

London.

I called at your house this morning, to give you a curious piece of news. It is whispered that miss Clifford has gone off with Mr. Mordaunt. Some say they left town in the same carriage ; others that she went alone, and that he followed soon after. The variation is of little importance, as it is certain they are both gone ; and there can be little doubt of their meeting at some of the post-houses. Mrs. Darnley gives out that the lady is gone on a visit to Mrs. Sommers in Northumberland : that is not probable ; she came from thence very lately. Other wife-acres assert that they are gone to be married in Scotland. Why should he carry her to

Scotland? She is not a prize to be run off with, surely. He has had experience sufficient to know that his passion can cool soon enough without his either marrying, or carrying the object of it to so frigid a country. But I leave you to judge whether Mordaunt is a likely man to marry in any country. Both you and I, my dear friend, are acquainted with women of superior beauty to miss Clifford, who have been betrayed by this man: though I don't know if it can be called *betraying*; for, it is said, he never mentioned marriage to any of those infatuated creatures.

I know, my dear madam, that your sympathising breast will feel severely on this occasion; for the whole will be public directly; and there is no possibility of your having any farther connection with the unhappy young woman.

How unfortunate! that she did not follow the example of some wary ladies of

our acquaintance, who, being equally culpable, have avoided all *éclat*, and of course are received every where, notwithstanding an universal conviction that they deserve to be comprehended within the bill of exclusion.

This incident will certainly produce a struggle between the purity of lady Diana Franklin and her friendship for the fallen nymph, before she will be able to determine whether to break with her entirely or not. As for Mordaunt, I make no doubt of his abandoning miss Clifford just as he did others, with whom his connection has not as yet been so completely ascertained. He has resigned the French woman that he brought over already. She pretends, I understand, to be a marchioness ; but, more probably, is the wife or daughter of some Parisian tradesman. Several of the real nobility of France, I hear, have been under the necessity of exercising trade since they left their own country ; but a

far greater number of real trades-people from France have assumed the titles, and give themselves the airs of nobility. .

I wonder how Mr. Clifford will behave, when he comes to the knowledge of his sister's conduct. He has the reputation of being of a very violent temper, and is a hero in gallantry as well as Mordaunt ; with this difference, however, that he is less silent on the subject of his victories. He was expected in town ; but, I understand from my son, with whom he keeps up a constant correspondence, that he is wonderfully captivated by a young lady in his own neighbourhood, who seems to have driven from his memory all recollection of those who languish for his return to the capital.

Being informed that you intended to stay three or four days with lady ——, I thought it right to acquaint you with these particulars, because I am certain that your friendship for Mrs. Darnley will prompt you to

come directly to town, on purpose to do all in your power to support her spirits on this vexatious occasion.

I remain, my dear madam,

Your sincere and obedient servant,

E. DEANPORT.

LETTER XCIX.

*Miss Horatia Clifford to Lady Diana
Franklin.*

Ashwood.

HAPPY news ! the doctor has pronounced Juliet out of danger. I am giddy with joy. After reciprocal congratulations, I told the colonel I was going to communicate the tidings to you. He said he was also going to write on the same subject to his friend Mr. Mordaunt.

This put me in mind of your last letter ; some parts of which prove that you have conversed with people who are prejudiced against that gentleman.

I asked of the colonel how it happened that his friend Mr. Mordaunt, who is generally thought an agreeable man, had so many enemies.

His answer was—"Mordaunt is a man of wit."

"A man of wit!" said I.

"Yes," rejoined he; "of all the gifts of Nature to the human race, wit is the most envied, and the least forgiven."

But, of all my acquaintance, you are the person, my dear lady Diana, whom I should have thought the least likely to envy, and the most likely to forgive, a man for his wit. With respect to the gentleman in question, you will recollect that it was through your means that I became acquainted with him; for I first met him at the lodgings of the marchioness: from her I received the most favourable opinion of him. My uncle and aunt conceived the same: they invited him freely to their house. But it seems the man avows a determination never to marry: this is very afflicting news to be sure. Yet if any woman, who made no objection to being of his acquaintance before she received this information, were to avoid it immediately after,

would it not subject her to a strange imputation?

What has a woman, who expects and wishes for nothing in a man's society but agreeable conversation, to do with his determinations respecting marriage? Such a determination can, *at most*, be considered as a misfortune:—it cannot be imputed as a crime, my dear lady Diana, to a man more than to a woman; and therefore ought not to deprive him of the society of any virtuous women, except those who have no other view in cultivating his acquaintance but marrying him.

You also observe, that, notwithstanding his accomplishments, this Mr. Mordaunt's conversation is often more brilliant than sensible; that it is peculiarly agreeable to *young* women; and that, in spite of my guarded expressions, you perceive I view him with some partiality.

The letter, however, from which you

form this judgment, was written in circumstances which, with all your favour for sense and contempt of folly, I am persuaded would have influenced you yourself to have preferred agreeable nonsense to what is called solid sense. A pretty numerous company dined at my uncle's; among others, a Mr. Proser, who deals in nothing but sense, and that of the most solid kind: but he drew forth his commodity in such profusion, that he oppressed the whole company.

Had any one been disposed to have controverted what he said, it would have been difficult, for two reasons; one, that all he asserted was self-evident; the other, that he proved it by innumerable arguments.

At last, Mr. Mordaunt struck in with some observations of a lighter nature, which led to general conversation: this he supported in so entertaining a manner, as to restore good-humour and gaiety to the whole company, except Mr. Proser, whose countenance, though

far from being expressive, sufficiently marked his contempt for the playful wit of Mr. Mordaunt, and all who admired it. I whispered to Mr. Darnley, who seemed indignant at the airs of superior sagacity which Mr. Proser gave himself—"This man is most completely convinced of the depth of his own understanding."—"That is not wonderful," answered he; "for, though no man of sense thinks himself a fool, many fools think themselves men of sense."

I wrote my letter to you the same evening, under the impression made by the contrast between a tiresome man and an entertaining one; and, in spite of all my pains to use *guarded expressions*, I fear I have given you an idea of my having a greater partiality for the latter gentleman than I really have.

The world, you say, will place Mr. Mordaunt's visits to my account, rather than to that of my uncle or aunt, while I was in their house; but if he continues to visit them now, when I am three hundred miles

from it, I shall expect that you will acknowledge to me, in the name of the world, that it was mistaken.

I remain, my dear lady Diana, with affectionate compliments to the marchioness,

Your grateful and obedient servant,

H. CLIFFORD.

LETTER C.

*Lady DIANA FRANKLIN to Miss HORATIA
CLIFFORD.*

MY DEAR HORATIA,

Grove.

I NEVER received a more welcome letter than your last; the very first sentence of which dissipated the gloomy apprehensions my mind had been brooding over from the time I read your former.

I enter warmly into the transport of colonel Sommers on this happy event. He could have better supported the loss of Juliet, while he was courting her, than since she became his wife. That admirable good sense, that elegant simplicity, which marks her,

—“one by Nature taught
To breathe her genuine thought,”

and all those endearing qualities she has had occasion to show, since their marriage,

have made a more delightful impression on his calm and steady mind than all her beauty had done before. Notwithstanding the intrepidity and firmness of his character, I am persuaded that her loss would have broken his heart.—What a noble heart would have been broken !

With what admirable judgment has your friend disposed of her hand and fortune ! What are titles ; what external grace ; what all the sparklings of wit, so fascinating to the fancy of many women ; what are all those qualities together in a husband, in comparison with the constancy, the complacent temper, and other virtues of colonel Sommers ?

You must have observed, my dear Horatia, how highly I have been charmed with that natural cheerfulness of mind which you possess. It was one of the greatest delights of your mother's life : it soothed the affliction of your father after her death ; and it has afforded me many pleasing hours, since I was

deprived of my two friends. Yet, I must own, that the fear of any occurrence that would throw a gloom over a character so formed for giving and receiving happiness has given me some disturbance, on particular occasions ; and my constant prayer, my dear Horatia, is, that you may be able always to preserve that enviable gaiety of temper, that precludes sorrow from your own breast, and communicates cheerfulness to that of others.

I should have been entertained with the sportive tenor of some parts of your last letter, even though I had not been pre-disposed to the admission of cheerful ideas by the beginning of it.

By the last paragraph, however, it appears that you think the world more ready to acknowledge a mistake than I have ever found it.

Mr. Mordaunt's attention to you, from the time he returned from his brother's, was remarked ; his lingering in London, instead

of going immediately to see his friend Sommers, as he had given out, was laid entirely to your account. Calumny itself, one would have thought, could not directly censure your going to Ashwood, on hearing of Juliet's illness. It was soon whispered, however, that Mr. Mordaunt would set out after you ; and, though nothing could be more natural than his going to visit his friend colonel Sommers, yet it was asserted that he would not have left London if you had remained in it. I suppose he arrived at Ashwood soon after you sent your last letter to the post-house.

While I admire that glow of friendship which, in disregard of all engagements, however agreeable, prompted you to hurry to your friend's bed-side, at three hundred miles distance, without sleep or refreshment, but what you took in the chaise, I cannot help reminding you, that another has a claim, which she cannot relinquish, on that friendship : I also am languishing for your presence,

It is very long since I had the happiness of seeing you ; and, since Juliet is entirely out of danger, and you have so completely fulfilled whatever affection could require towards your *young* friend, I hope you will now take leave of her, and return, by easy stages, to your *old* one.

Independent of the pleasure you will thereby give me and the marchioness, who is here at present, but in daily expectation of a summons to join her husband, your leaving Ashwood will at once put an end to the idle rumours and conjectures that have arisen in consequence of Mr. Mordaunt's following you.

Notwithstanding the playful arguments of your last epistle, your own serious reflection and good sense, my dear, must suggest, that it becomes a virtuous young woman to avoid giving the shadow of foundation to so injurious a suspicion as that she encourages the pursuits of a man of Mr. Mordaunt's principles : I therefore say no more, but shall expect the pleasure of seeing you at the Grove

before the end of next week. I remain, with
the warmest affection,

Your friend,

D. FRANKLIN.

I understand that a new source of vexation has arisen to lady Deanport, in a quarter from whence she little expected it. A miss Almond, who was much with her ladyship when she went to Yorkshire, was lately invited to her house in town. To console himself for your cruelty, lord Deanport took a fancy for this girl ; the effect of which has been, that miss Almond, from the humblest of all companions, and most obsequious of all toad-eaters, began to behave with insolence to her ladyship. This, it seems, was not resented by my lord in the manner she expected. Miss Almond still remains in the family : and my lady and her son are not on the best terms.

LETTER CI.

DANIEL PROCTOR, *Efq. to Miss ALMOND.*

DEAR MISS ALMOND,

Newcastle.

I DID not intend to address you until I should arrive at my own house, where I might have leisure to compose a letter with all the deliberation which the delicacy of the subject requires ; for, I must confess, my dear young lady, that, instead of praising, which would have been more agreeable to me, I am under the necessity of censuring your conduct. But, having been detained by necessary business (for nothing but necessary business could have detained me so long in this town) I began to fear, that if I delayed any longer, the admonition which I propose to give you might arrive too late ; and, in that case, what I intend as admonition might appear in the light of reproach. People in general cannot bear to have their conduct censured, even although the censure should be designed for their good ; but, as

there is no general rule without exceptions,
I hope you will prove yourself to be one.

Having thus endeavoured to render what might be thought bitter in this letter a little palatable, just as physicians add syrups to the medicines they prescribe to children, I shall proceed to the main object I have in view in writing to you.—I must begin by informing you, in the first place, that I was sorry that my good friend, your aunt, consented to your going to London to live with a lady of quality; because it is an old observation, and a true one, that young women are prone to imitate the manners of those they live with; and the manners of women of quality and high birth are not suitable to modest young women of respectable parentage. This only applied to the risk you ran from the contagion of lady Deanport's example and that of her acquaintance: I confess I did not think of her son, because I understood that he was at that time courting miss Moyston, the rich heiress, and therefore imagined he would be too much occupied with her to think of you. But I

have since learnt, from a correspondent of strict veracity, who does not give credit to reports lightly, that miss Moyston refused lord Deanport, and married another, which has driven lord Deanport to desperation. Since which he frequents your company to such a degree, that his mother is offended, and has written to your aunt to desire you to return to York, which you have refused. My correspondent adds, that you sometimes drive about in my lord's carriage, that he himself saw you in his company at the play-house, richly dressed, and with a miniature picture, set in diamonds, hanging from your neck ; that your whole manner, and even the style of your language, is quite changed ; that, instead of being obsequious and obliging, as you were formerly, you now assume a proud look and disdainful air. Those, and other circumstances that I omit, create suspicion that he wishes to rob you of the precious jewel of your virgin innocence ; after which, all the jewels he can decorate you with will be badges of dishonour. O, my dear miss Almond ! let this

never be said with trouth of you. Give him back all his jewels, and whatever present beside he may have made to you ; and I hereby engage to advance to you a sum of money equal to their full value, whatever it may be. If I had time, and did not wish that this should remain unknown to every one but ourselves, I would send you my bond to that purpose ; but I hope you will think my word, which, I thank God, I never forfeited hitherto, and I am now sixty years of age, is every bit as good.

I beg, therefore, that you will do as I have requested ; and, also, that you will return immediately to your aunt, at York ; which, I hope, will put an end to the unfavourable rumours that are in circulation concerning you. Or, in case it should not entirely have that effect (for it must be acknowledged that a good name once lost is not easily regained), still it will show that, although you have been imprudent, that you are resolved to be so no more.

You may, perhaps, imagine that I give you this advice with a view to repeat my proposal

for a matrimonial union between you and me; but I think it fair to assure you that I have no such intention. On mature and serious deliberation, I am now convinced that marriage at my age, particularly with a woman at yours, would not be productive of all the happiness to either party that is to be wished. I therefore very sincerely pray, that you may obtain a younger, and, every thing considered, I may add—a better husband than I should prove.

I have been lately informed, that Mr. Walker, the haberdasher, is now in far better circumstances than when he courted you, he having succeeded to his uncle the ironmonger's fortune, which enables him to retire entirely from trade, and live like a gentleman in the country; for which purpose he has purchased four acres of land, advantageously situated on the great London-road, where he intends to build a commodious house, as soon as the ground is completely drained.

The person who gave me this information is the intimate friend of Mr. Walker; and he told me, over and above, that that gentle-

man, viz. Mr. Walker, who is undoubtedly a gentleman now, is as fond of you as ever, though considerably altered in some other respects, particularly since he was an officer of light infantry in a volunteer company; which, however, he was obliged to quit, because the largeness of the hinder and lower part of his person, though pretty well concealed by long clothes, appeared so vast in his short military jacket, that it excited the laughter of indiscreet spectators, and disgusted him with the service. However, instead of a white perriwig, with two regular rows of large curls, he now wears a little smart dark scratch; and blue pantaloons instead of breeches, and half-boots instead of shoes, when he is in full dress. My friend also assures me, that, though this may in part proceed from some remains of his military spirit, yet, he is persuaded, it is chiefly with a view to gratify you, as he is informed it is the present London mode of dress, which he knows was always approved of by you: for, notwithstanding the harsh manner in which you rejected him formerly,

he is determined to renew his suit as soon as you return to York, in the hopes that this great addition to his fortune will render you more favourably disposed than formerly. I judged it proper to acquaint you with this, that you might be prepared to act as your understanding may dictate ; and, as Mr. Walker is on the whole a well-disposed man, not above five or six and forty years of age, and will now be able to live in a genteel manner, according to your taste, I hope that you will find his proposals agreeable ;—which hope, I do assure you, my dear young lady, is more owing to the interest I take in your happiness than his. At all events, I earnestly intreat that you will send lord Deanport back every present he has ever made you, and set out directly after to your afflicted aunt. As soon as you shall have arrived there, let me know, and I will endeavour to wait on you at York ; or, if I am prevented, send you a draught for the money.

I am, dear miss Almond,
Your constant well-wisher and humble servant,

DANIEL PROCTOR.

LETTER CII.

From Miss ALMOND to DANIEL PROCTOR, Esq.

SIR,

London.

ALTHOUGH I have received a great many epistolary letters from gentlemen during the short time I have hitherto been in this world, yet I cannot but observe, that I have the honour to acknowledge, that that which my footman has just delivered to me from you is the most extraordinary, or, I may presume to add, the most unprecedented, I ever saw in the whole course of my existence.

You really seem to be what Mr. Townly calls rusticated ; which, perhaps, may be imputed to your living continually in the country : but that is no reason for your not writing with common politeness, which, as I heard lady Varnish observe, is one of those things which render the intercourse between the sexes in society so agreeable ; and the

want of which may make all your great loyalty to his majesty very much to be doubted ; for, in a book upon polite conversation, by Mr. Simon Wagstaff, esq. which I was reading when the French *friseur* was dressing my hair, I find these lines,

“ Who in his talk can’t speak a polite thing,
Will never loyal be to George our king.”

I recommend the perusal of that book to you, Mr. Proctor, on purpose to purify a little your style of language, particularly when you write to the fair sex ; that you may never again mention a certain article of men’s dress by a name which obliges a woman of true politeness and fashion to blush ; especially as you cannot but know that the very article I mean goes by the name of *small-clothes* as well as breeches. But, whether you take my counsel in this or not, allow me to tell you, sir, that you have no right to employ a spy on my conduct, in a sphere of life of which neither you, nor your vulgar narrow-minded correspondents, are proper judges of.

It is very true, sir, that I have a friendship for my lord Deanport, because of his noble birth, as well as his other accomplishments ; and if he has the same delicate sincere friendship for me, which he swears he has, and that it will be eternal, what right have you, or any one else, to find the least fault with it ?

You seem to have no notion of pure refined friendship between man and woman, Mr. Proctor, which makes you write as you do, of his robbing me of my precious jewel and virgin innocence, and such like vulgar stuff as never once entered my head : and it is quite monstrous that it should enter yours, at an age when, by your own confession, in your indecent letter to me, you are unfit for marriage.

You might have spared yourself the trouble of informing me that you did not intend to renew your odious proposals, as you might well imagine I should now reject them with more disdain than ever ; but I must confess that I admire your assurance in mentioning to

me the name of Walker the haberdasher; as if I could be tempted by his pitiful fortune and new house, to leave the first-rate society of men of high rank, which sometimes dines with my lord, and of ladies, which visits me, and which dresses as genteel as any in the capital, to pass my life in the marshes of Yorkshire, with such vermin as Walker, and his friends the dissenters.

As for lady Deanport's being offended, that gives me little concern; perhaps she may have reason to repent the airs she has given herself, and that she has made an enemy of one who was disposed to be her friend and benefactor. She ought to remember that she was no better than a plain miss, as well as myself, when the late lord Deanport married her; but of that I choose to be silent at present: only, before I conclude, I must inform you, that I desire no more of your admonitions, which, in spite of all the sugar you have put into them, I found so nauseous that I threw them into the only place fit for them.

If I had shown your letter to my lord Deanport, he would, perhaps, have given you a lesson that would have made you write with proper respect of your superiors, and taught you, old as you are, better manners in future.—No more at present, being, sir,

Yours, &c.

MARGARET ALMOND.

LETTER CIH.

Miss Horatia Clifford to Lady Diana Franklin.

Ashwood.

JULIET gains strength every minute ; she sits up several hours daily. Her recovery has filled this whole family with happiness, and diffused joy over a populous neighbourhood. The arrival of Mr. Mordaunt communicated additional satisfaction to colonel Sommers. I was present at their first meeting. I never beheld more genuine marks of delight than both manifested. It was not thought proper that he should be presented to Juliet till the next day. She afterwards told me, " that, prepared as she was to see a man eminently agreeable, the engaging ease and elegance of Mr. Mordaunt's manners and appearance had exceeded her expectation. Of the praises which she was accustomed to hear

her husband bestow on him, she had imputed a greater share to the partiality of friendship than she now thought justly belonged to it."

It is not difficult to perceive, my dear lady Diana, that this gentleman gives you some uneasiness on my account. Notwithstanding your desire of seeing the marchioness, and entertaining her at the Grove, before she leaves England, I greatly suspect that you would not have left Mrs. Denham, until she was fully recovered, had it not been for that reason.

Though I do not think your apprehensions well founded, I have the warmest sense of obligation to you for the maternal attachment from which they originate.

Your earnestness for my immediate return to town I believe to be, in a great measure, derived from the same source; though, to spare my self-love, you impute your anxiety to the malevolent constructions of the world, rather than to your fear of any weakness on my part. Yet I remember having heard

you observe, that those who expect to escape free from the idle and malicious rumours that busy and envious people are continually circulating, will, in all probability, be disappointed. But still you say it is proper, particularly for young women, to avoid whatever may be considered as a plausible foundation for malice to build upon. Without making myself an absolute slave, by unceasing circumspection where I apprehend no danger, I have observed your maxim, and been at pains to avoid what malice could plausibly build a scandalous story upon. What has the pains I took for this purpose availed?—Nothing. Malice requires no plausible or solid pretext to build on; she rears her fabrics on shadows light as air. Mr. Mordaunt pays a visit to his most intimate friend a little after I went to comfort mine in her illness. Is there any plausible foundation for malice here? What says Malice? Why, that under the pretext of visiting a female friend, I have given a rendez-

vous to a man.—Could I foresee a construction of this nature ? Even if I had foreseen it, it would not have prevented my visit to Juliet.

You say my leaving Ashwood immediately, and returning to London, would put an end to all the rumours and conjectures to which Mr. Mordaunt's following me has given rise : but, if an end were put to them, would not new rumours be instantly circulated, of perhaps a more malignant import, with the same affiduity. It may be prudent, for aught I know, *not* to put an end to the circulation of those rumours, on the same principle (as we are informed by Plutarch) that Alcibiades cut off his dog's tail :—better they should assert, that Mr. Mordaunt followed me, than that I followed him.

Can you really advise me, my beloved friend, to disturb all the repose of my life by a vain struggle to stem the overflowings of malice, which has flowed, and will flow, through the revolutions of ages. A woman, con-

scious of her own virtue, has a right to despise the forced and malignant constructions of the world ;—as they cannot fully the purity of her intentions, she ought not to allow them to annoy the tranquillity of her mind.

However obstinate I have sometimes been in adhering to my own opinions, and endeavouring to support them in the best manner I could by serious, or, if these were wanting, by playful arguments, yet I have always entertained a much higher respect for yours ; and I am sensible, that when I have acted on my own, in preference to yours, I have often had reason to repent it.—Yet I cannot help thinking, that the ill opinion you have received of Mr. Mordaunt proceeds, in a great measure, from misrepresentation. When I informed you that this gentleman's appearance had confirmed the favourable notion that Juliet, whose account came from her husband, had previously given me of him, I could not help wishing you were with us at

Ashwood; because I thought the same behaviour which confirmed my impression would remove yours: besides, I know that you entertain the highest opinion of colonel Sommers. Can you believe, my dear lady Diana, that a person of his discernment and honourable principles would choose a man of a directly opposite character for his most intimate and confidential friend? To me, this seems impossible.

I suspect that you have seen little of Mr. Mordaunt, except in pretty numerous companies: there, indeed, his sole object seemed to be to inspire gaiety, and rouse the spirit of mirth.

I remarked this as often as I saw him in large and mixed companies, at my uncle's, and other houses in London; and, had you yourself been present on those occasions, my dear lady Diana, you would have seen that there was no room for serious discourse; and that those who attempted to introduce any

thing of that nature were considered in the same light with Mr. Profer, of whom I formerly gave you some account.

But here it has been otherwise ; for, though Juliet's recovery removed those painful forebodings that harassed our minds before, still a darkish cloud hung over our hearts, which, without producing what could be called sorrow, refused admission to mirth : there was no other company besides Mr. Proctor, a very respectable clergyman, of whom the colonel has a high esteem, Mr. Mordaunt, and myself. All of us took a warm interest in Juliet. It is impossible for human creatures, however unconnected before, to harbour the same fears and wishes for any length of time, and have opportunities of communicating them, without acquiring sentiments of goodwill and friendship towards each other. Such communications augment joy, and alleviate grief ; of course, they create friendship.

The conversation since I have been at Ashwood, therefore, has been of a graver cast

than any in which I ever before heard Mr. Mordaunt engaged ; and sometimes it led to discussions which you would think little to his taste, and to subjects with which he might be supposed unacquainted :—on these, however, he delivered his sentiments in a style and manner which delighted his friend the colonel, drew the admiration of the clergyman, who, I am convinced, is a man of taste as well as learning, and would, as I am firmly persuaded, have gained your approbation, my dear lady Diana, had you been present.

But I begin to dread that my dwelling so long on this subject will increase your notion of my partiality : though surely a desire of doing bare justice to any person is no proof of partiality. I never saw you yourself, my dear madam, more warm than when you have stood up for those whose characters were calumniated or misrepresented in your presence. In other respects, the person in question, on the present occasion, is nothing

to me—farther, indeed, than as the most intimate and most esteemed friend of my dear Juliet's husband, and a gentleman whose conversation I think agreeable.

When I hinted my design to leave Ashwood at the end of this week, which you seem to expect, the colonel expressed much surprise; said he was certain it would afflict Juliet to a degree that might retard her recovery; and pressed me so earnestly to postpone my intention, that I have consented to stay beyond the time you mentioned. You will let the marchioness know as much; and you may rely on it, that I will leave this place as soon as I can with propriety.

I remain, my dear lady Diana,

With the most affectionate esteem,

Yours,

H. CLIFFORD.

P.S. Before I sealed this, your second from the Grove arrived. You persist in requiring me to leave this place. I believe what

I have laid above will not alter your opinion. Without waiting for another letter, therefore, I shall set out so as to be with you at the time you exact. I have already informed colonel Sommers of my determination. He could not but be surprised ; but, perceiving that I was resolved, he refrained from urging my stay in direct terms. He begged, however, to know what the pressing business was which called me so suddenly from my friend. In *that* you know, my dear madam, it was not in my power to satisfy him : I only answered that the business was *indispensable*.

To accommodate my conduct to your ideas, though I myself may see no urgent necessity for what is insisted on, I consider as my duty.—A few months before my father's death, he pointed out a variety of situations wherein *reason* might prompt one line of conduct, and *inclination* another. I said “I was determined to follow the dictates of my reason, such as it was, in all doubtful cases.” “ You had better,” said he, “ follow the

advice of your mother's beloved friend, lady Diana."—"What!" replied I, "though contrary to my reason."—"Yes, my dear," rejoined he; "because, at your age, it is not uncommon to mistake inclination for reason, and to be misled by the former, when we think we are under the guidance of the latter. Lady Diana falls into this mistake seldomer than any woman I know."

While I recollect these words, my dear madam, I never will put my own notions of propriety in opposition to yours. Though, I confess, if you had not expressed a different opinion, I should not have discovered any impropriety in my remaining at Ashwood until my friend had entirely recovered.

LETTER CIV.

Mrs. DEMURE to the Countess of
DEANPORT.

MY DEAR COUNTESS,

London.

I HAVE a becoming sense of your kind attention, in sending me the news in town when I was last in the country ; particularly in giving me the earliest intelligence of miss Clifford's elopement,—which, though it proved to be false, afforded as much amusement to her ladyship, and the company with whom I then was, as if it had been true.

Your old housekeeper has been with me this morning, to inform me, that, a few hours after your ladyship left town, lord Deanport carried miss Almond out in his carriage—her sudden illness having been af-

fected, to prevent her accompanying you to Oxfordshire. She said she suspected this at the time, as miss Almond and my lord's valet had been making preparations for a journey; but she had concealed it from you, because your ladyship had ordered her never to inform you of any thing that would give you uneasiness. She was afraid you would hear of this journey, in spite of all her precaution, because lady Mangō, as she returned to town, met my lord and miss Almond on the road to Portsmouth; and by her ladyship's indefatigable activity, in driving about since her arrival, it is now spread all over the town that they are to embark directly for Hamburg.

I thought it my duty to inform you of this, lest it should come misrepresented to your ladyship's ears:—I am not of the prevailing opinion, that miss Almond will be able to wheedle his lordship into a marriage; for though he seems distractedly fond of her, and

She certainly has infinitely too much influence with him, yet it is to be hoped that prudence, good sense, and reflection, though uncommon at his years, will prevent him from a step so disgraceful, especially as there is no reason to think that any *friend or companion of his lordship acts in concert with the damsel, and has an interest in persuading him to such a measure.* From your ladyship's having chosen miss Almond as a companion, I never doubted her being a young woman of talents; but I should be extremely sorry, on my lord's account, to think that she was mistress of all the cunning and address that I have heard imputed to her. At all events, I thought the sooner you knew what has happened the better, that you may not be too late in adopting whatever measures your wisdom may suggest.

I remain, with the most sincere and respectful friendship,

Your ladyship's most obedient servant,

ANGELINA CELESTINA DEMURE.

LETTER CV.

*The Countess of DEANPORT to
Mrs. DEMURE.*

MY DEAR MADAM,

Tunbridge.

I RETURN you thanks for the friendly letter you addressed to me when I was in Oxfordshire. The affair you communicated gave me more uneasiness on the girl Almond's account than on my son's. With regard to him, it will be considered merely as a piece of levity natural to youth; but to her the consequence will be more serious, because she has not the address of those women who keep their intrigues concealed from public observation, nor the audacity of those who, in defiance of the public impression, and of their own consciousness, give themselves the airs of prudery and innocence.

I am of your opinion, that there is no dan-

ger of lord Deanport being wheedled into marriage by miss Almond, because I know, and this assurance will afford you, my dear Angelina Celestina Grizzel, peculiar satisfaction—I know that he has had the prudence to elude the snares of women more mature, and more exercised in the arts of seduction, than that poor girl can be.

On my return to town, among other papers which my son, from his usual carelessness, left in his apartment, I found a letter from Mr. Clifford. I fear it has been perused by some of the servants ; but, to prevent the same from happening again, I now inclose it. I intended to have had the pleasure of waiting on you before I went to Tunbridge ; but the party with which I go hurry me without mercy ; and so, my dear friend, I must bid you adieu.

F. DEANPORT.

LETTER CVI.

WILLIAM CLIFFORD, Esq. to the Earl of
DEANPORT.

MY DEAR LORD,

Clifford-House.

As you repeat, in your last letter, the wish you formerly expressed to see me in town, I am sorry I cannot immediately comply with a request which does me honour.

I will however frankly acknowledge, that your lordship conjectures right, in thinking that I am detained here by the charms of a woman whom I cannot prevail on to accompany me to London; though, in my present humour, I think I should be happy to accompany her any where, except, perhaps, to Gretna-green. What you will think more extraordinary is, that she is not a new acquaintance, but one that I have long known, and for whom I always had a partiality,

though she never appeared so bewitchingly-agreeable, in all respects, as since I last came to Northumberland. Mordaunt is with his friend, colonel Sommers, at Ashwood. Though I am not particularly fond of that gentleman's company, I should not like to leave the country while such a marauder remains in it:—yet, I think, he will hardly venture to plunder any of my property.

I have another reason, which, independent of those I have mentioned, would of itself be sufficient to prevent me from going to London at present—Mrs. Demure is there. I once had a fancy for that woman: she was otherwise engaged at that time; and she thought proper, though I understand it has not always been her practice, to throw cold water on my flame.

On my last return from the continent, I found her in a much more favourable disposition: but my fancy had changed as well as hers. As she had warmed, I had cooled; not so completely, however, as to render me quite

indifferent to her advances ; but, as the enthusiasm of the business was gone, I became fatigued with the attentions the lady required ; and, after promising to return soon, I fled to Northumberland, where I have met with a young lady of a very different description, blooming, modest, unaffected, and unsophisticated in all respects. How the business between her and me will end, I know not ; but I confess that, independent of her attractions, I should be unwilling to return at present to London, and be exposed to the same kind of persecution your lordship observed when I was last there.

You will be the more disposed to sympathise with me, as I have heard that the widow, at one period, manifested a *velléité* for your lordship.

I remain
Your lordship's very obedient,
humble servant,

WILLIAM CLIFFORD

LETTER CVII.

Miss Clifford to Lady Diana Franklin.

MY DEAR LADY DIANA,

Ashwood.

AFTER receiving my last, you could have no doubt of my intention to leave this place. I am going to relate what has prevented me.

You know my affection for Mary Proctor : she was my earliest playfellow ; is one of the sweetest-tempered and most disinterested girls alive. Her chief pleasure always was to oblige. She preferred my company to that of her nearest relations : her confidence in me was unbounded. Her father is one of the most upright men in the world : he has peculiarities that expose him sometimes to ridicule ; but his benevolence secures him the esteem of every person of worth.

On the evening of the day on which I last wrote to you, miss Proctor, saying she in-

tended to write to her father, retired, after tea, to her room. Colonel Sommers and Mr. Mordaunt were engaged at chess. Instead of my usual walk in the venerable front-avenue, I sauntered alone all the way to the water-fall, and was returning by the Yew Grove, when I saw a man issue from it, and deliver a letter to a woman who advanced from the back-door of the garden. She evidently came in expectation of the letter. Though it began to be duskish, I recognised the man to be my brother's French servant. The woman, having received the letter, was returning by the way she came ; when, perceiving one of the under-gardeners standing at the gate, she turned suddenly to the left, and met me, whom she had not before remarked. You will judge of my surprise when I name miss Proctor.—At sight of me she started, and betrayed great confusion. We returned to the house together without uttering a word. She stopped a little at the door of her apartment, as if she meant

that I should pass to my own ; but I entered hers.

That I might let her know the full extent of what I had observed, and save her the mortification of attempting fruitless misrepresentation, I said—“ Was not that my brother’s servant, my dear ?”

“ Who ?”

“ The person who gave you the letter.”

“ If it was—there is no harm, I presume, in receiving a letter from your brother.”

“ I hope not—yet the man seemed to have some notion of that kind ; for he quickly made his escape, as if he had been conscious of having done wrong.”

To this she said nothing.—I resumed :—

“ You never told me, my dear Mary, that you were carrying on a correspondence with my brother.”

“ You have had a misunderstanding with your brother,” replied she.

“ That does not render me the less your friend : but perhaps your father is acquainted with it.”

She blushed; but made no answer.

“ My dear Mary,” resumed I, “ you cannot think it right, surely, to receive letters from any man, without acquainting your father.”

“ You know, very well, that he is prejudiced against your brother.”

“ Is it right in a daughter to carry on a secret correspondence with a man against whom her father is prejudiced?”

“ Your brother is generally thought a man of honour.”

“ Perhaps so, my dear: yet a correspondence with him may injure the character of a woman of honour, particularly when carried on without the knowledge of her father—and so good, so affectionate a father as you are blessed with.”

She burst into tears. On which, taking her by the hand, I put her in mind of our long friendship, said every thing which I imagined could soothe her, and regain her confidence, assuring her that I was not prompted by idle or officious curiosity, but the purest good will,

in wishing to know the nature of her correspondence with my brother.

She threw her arms around my neck, and said, that "she knew her father had been offended with my brother ; and, though they had been on better terms of late, yet she had been afraid to give him the least hint of her having this correspondence : but she blamed herself more in concealing it from me :—now she would inform me of every thing." She proceeded, in broken accents,—“ You must have observed, my dear Horatia, the great regard I have long had for your brother ; you may remember the early partiality he showed for me, when we were both children. He went abroad, and, as I dreaded, forgot me. My regard for him had taken deeper root ; all my endeavours to efface it were vain : my fancy followed him wherever he went. I felt an interest, unknown before, in the countries where he resided. What knowledge I have acquired respecting France, Switzerland, Germany, and Italy, proceeds

from the inquiries I made, and the books I read, relative to those countries, while your brother was in them. My father was flattered with my assiduity, and with the progress I made in a species of knowledge for which he had often lamented I had so little taste. He little suspected that both were excited by the interest I took in a person of whom he was daily expressing an ill opinion. Indeed, my father's prejudice had an effect directly contrary to what he intended. I did not believe what was often repeated in my hearing, to your brother's disadvantage. Finding that some things were exaggerated, I concluded that all were false: and whatever was said in his praise,—and you know that much may be said in his praise,—I believed to be true. When he last returned to England, and came to visit this family, I dare say he discovered the state of my heart. His visits were frequent,—he sought occasions of seeing me alone,—he spoke the language of love,—he declared that he had al-

ways loved me. When Mrs. Sommers was taken ill he was more assiduous than before ; but my concern for her, and the fear of losing her for ever, made me listen with less attention to his declarations, and often to decline the meetings he requested. He expressed uneasiness when he heard of your arrival ; said he had reasons, which he would communicate hereafter, for not wishing to see you ; and earnestly begged that, as he should be seldom at Ashwood, we might correspond by letters ;—which request I at last complied with.”

I asked if he had ever spoken to her of marriage ? She answered, “ that he had ; but had told her, at the same time, that he was entangled by an affair which his relations had pressed upon him—a woman of rank and fortune ; that it was entirely a scheme of theirs, in which he himself had taken little or no part ; but it would require some management and time to break it completely off with decency ; that one reason for his declining to

meet me at colonel Sommers's was, that he might escape my teasing him on that subject.” “And this,” continued the candid girl, “was the reason that I met you with less cordiality when you came to Ashwood than I ever did before in my whole life.”

You may easily conceive, my dear lady Diana, how very much I was shocked at this perfidious conduct of my brother.

She then showed me the letter she had just received. It was full of the common jargon of flames, and darts, and racks, and tortures; and ended with an insinuation that he would not long survive her cruelty: and begging that she would meet him at a certain cottage, about a mile from Ashwood, as he had something of a very agreeable nature, which he could not transmit by letter, to communicate, was the modest proposal which formed the postscript.

While I stood silent, from indignation,—“I wonder,” said she, “what he has to inform me of which he could not communicate in writing.”

I plainly perceived that she thought he meant a proposal of marrying her secretly.

"He has nothing to inform you of, my dear, that you ought to listen to," said I.

"I cannot allow myself to believe that your brother is not a man of honour. Every body says he is a man of honour."

"On what occasion, my dear, had you an opportunity of hearing any one speak of my brother's honour?"

"I remember," she replied, "being present in a company where you was much praised, and something rather slighting fell from one gentleman respecting your brother; on which major Punto swore, that Mr. Clifford was as much a man of honour as his sister, or any other female, could be a *woman* of honour. All the company acknowledged the truth of what the major asserted."

"You know, my dear Mary," resumed I, "that male and female honour are different."

"I thought," said she, "that honour was

of an invariable nature, and the same in every rational creature."

" It is not so estimated by the world," I added. " A man who submits to an insult, without exacting satisfaction, is considered as dishonoured, though in other respects he may be a just and benevolent man. A woman who, in a single instance, has yielded to the seductions of illicit love, is considered as having forfeited her honour, though, otherwise, of an estimable character and amiable disposition. It is of no use to say that the world forms an erroneous judgment; — still it is the world's judgment.

" When my brother, therefore, talks to you of your cruelty, and intreats you to abate of it for his gratification, the proper answer for you to make would be, to tell him, with a very serious face, that you were seized with a violent desire to see him kicked, or pulled a little by the nose, in a public company: and if he refuses to indulge you, on the

paltry pretence that, by submitting to such treatment, he would be dishonoured, tell him you are fully aware of that, but still you hoped he would submit to dishonour for your sake ; and as for a few kicks, and a twist by the nose, what did they signify, when compared to the flames, darts, racks, and tortures which you wou'd endure, if he continued obstinate, and refused to gratify you?"

The artless girl alternately smiled and blushed at the ridiculous light in which I put the case : but, next morning, she wrote a letter of my dictating to my brother, in which she reproaches him for the proposal he had made, and declares that she will never write or receive another letter from him, without the knowledge and approbation of her father. And this epistle she sent openly, by her own footman,

I do not, however, think it right to leave this amiable, but easy-tempered girl, until I have accompanied her to her father's house.

It is plain to me, that, although I have opened her eyes respecting the base views of my brother, she still retains a too tender regard for him.

I am convinced, my dear lady Diana, that the reasons I have given for delaying my return to the Grove will meet with your approbation. You will hear again soon from

Your ever affectionate

H. CLIFFORD.

LETTER CVIII.

Lord MORDAUNT to the Hon. JOHN MORDAUNT,

MY DEAR JACK,

London.

THE court you so assiduously paid to Miss Horatia Clifford, when you was last in town, is given as the cause of her refusing the hand of lord Deanport. Whether this is to be considered as a misfortune to the young lady, or not, I am too little acquainted with the noble lord to know; but the report now in circulation, that, with her approbation, you have followed her to Northumberland, is certainly unfortunate: for though this report is believed by few, it is circulated by many, and, sometimes, with the most malignant commentaries. If I had never seen miss Clifford, nor ever heard her spoken of as beautiful and accomplished, I should have conceived her to be both, from the extraordinary degree of envy and malignity she has excited in the breasts of some of

her own sex. Her journey to the north was mentioned at an assembly where I was lately.

“Who could have believed it?” said one lady.

“Mr. Mordaunt and she set out together?” said a second.

“The same carriage I do assure you,” answered a third.

“Forgive me, madam,” said a fourth—“Miss Clifford had the prudence to set out from London alone; and when Mr. Mordaunt overtook her at an inn, they seemed greatly surprised at the unexpected rencontre; and they did not travel in the same carriage till then.”

“It is a great pity,” resumed the third, “that Mr. Mordaunt has so great an aversion to matrimony; because, after what has happened, Miss Clifford will not hold her head so high as she did, and may become a very obedient wife.”

“But as it is probable he will retain his old aversion,” rejoined the fourth, “particularly after what has happened, it is most likely that Miss Clifford never will be wife at all.”

" Well," said lady Aspic, who had listened to the discourse with much satisfaction, " if she never should be a wife, she will still make as good an old maid as many others."

This set the whole good-natured group a laughing, and filled me with so much indignation, that I rose, went into another room, and joined lady Amelia Melton, whom I saw in conversation with your friend lord P—. In a short time I heard lady Aspic's silly remark circulating as an admirable *bon-mot*. When it was repeated to lady Amelia, instead of laughing like many others, I observed that she blushed. I believe she has often cause to blush for her aunt.

Though the obvious rancour of some of those women will probably defeat its purpose, yet, it must be admitted, my dear Jack, that the celebrity of certain adventures of yours renders it hazardous for a young woman to be much of your acquaintance.

This is not so surprising, as that the circumstance which ought to make them avoid it seems to have an opposite effect.

I have heard miss Clifford so very advantageously spoken of, that I am unwilling to believe that this is the case with her ; and it would give me great uneasiness if the reputation of this young lady should be at all injured, in the opinion of any person of candour, by your means. Independent of her personal good qualities, she is of a most respectable family : I remember to have heard my father speak of Mr. and Mrs. Clifford in the warmest terms of regard.

After what I have said, you must be sensible that your continued attentions would be injurious to her : I have, therefore, thought it expedient to send this letter by express, which will furnish you with a sufficient pretext for coming to London directly,—by which, I do assure you, my dear brother, you will oblige me exceedingly. Do not dread my pressing you on the subject of lady Amelia Melton. The duchess dowager of —, immediately after your departure from Hampshire, assured me that she plainly perceived you were not interested in that lady to

the degree I flattered myself you would be. I have a very high opinion of her grace's penetration ; and I now give up a scheme, the success of which would have given me great pleasure, and which, I also knew, would have been very agreeable to her. I am somewhat afraid that the solicitude I have shown for your marrying has been teasing and disagreeable to you ; I have, therefore, come to the resolution never more to give you the least trouble on that subject.

If you should ever meet with a woman so much to your taste as to overcome the unlucky prejudice you have hitherto entertained against marriage, that woman will also be agreeable to me. None but a woman of sense and virtue, I am certain, *will* be to your taste. My sole motive for wishing you to adopt that state is, my conviction that in it you have the best chance for happiness ; and you yourself must be sensible, that if you continue to live out of it, your children, in case of your having any, will be subjected to many severe mortifications. This, to a feeling

heart, like yours, must be vexatious. In case, however, you never should meet with the happy rencontre I wish you, I shall support your ill fortune in that particular, if not without regret, at least without complaining.

Just as I was going to conclude this letter, I received a piece of news which will give you no uneasiness. Your friend lord P—, who it seems arrived at the duchess's, to whom he is related, a little after you left Hampshire—and soon after his return to London, made a proposal of marriage to lady Amelia Melton. I thought he was in love with her when I saw them at the assembly. I now understand that the duchess favours his suit, which is also promoted by the aunt. Lady Amelia herself seems nothing loath: where, indeed, could she find a more eligible husband? Nothing retards their union, except a proposal of lady Aspic's to put the young lady on a particular regimen for two months at least before the ceremony of marriage: but, as neither the duchess, nor the other parties concerned, seem to think this

necessary, lady Aspic's prescription will probably be dispensed with.

I end with repeating, that I never was more earnest in any thing than in your complying with my request to return immediately to London. The step is not more essential to miss Clifford's reputation than to your lasting peace of mind—and, I may add, to mine; for I do not think I should ever enjoy mental tranquillity if the person I love and esteem above any other in this world should persevere in a pursuit which, in spite of the light manner in which it is viewed by some part of the world, he himself must be conscious is inconsistent with genuine honour. I remain, my dear Jack,

Your affectionate brother,

MORDAUNT.

LETTER CIX.

*The Honourable JOHN MORDAUNT to Lord
MORDAUNT.*

MY DEAR BROTHER,

Ashwood.

IN consequence of your request, I should be with you myself at the time you receive this letter, if there were the least foundation for the apprehensions you express in your last.

I give you my word of honour, that miss Clifford went to Northumberland without my having any idea that she had any such intention, and directly on being informed of the illness of her friend Mrs. Sommers, with which I was unacquainted.

You will remember I informed you, before we parted in Hampshire, that I was to proceed to Ashwood, after a very short stay in London. That I made so long a stay, indeed, was entirely owing to my meeting with miss Clifford. Yet that was not the first time of my having met with that young

lady : I had before seen her at Lausanne, where she was with her father ; but she was then too young to make any lasting impression on my memory ; so that, when I met her again, after an interval of a few years, I had no recollection of having seen her before. But I must now inform you, that the miss Horatia Clifford, in whom I am happy to find your lordship so much interested, is the very *incognita* whom Travers and I met in our way to your house ; of whose beauty I raved so much, and should have continued to rave still more, if I had not perceived that the theme was disagreeable to you, who, at that time, I believe, would rather have wished my admiration directed to lady Amelia Melton.

After the transient view at the cottage, all the researches I set in movement to discover my *incognita* were to no purpose ; and I began to despair of ever again either seeing her, or any thing like her, when, most unexpectedly, I had the happiness of meeting her at the lodgings of my friend the marchioness.

shall at present omit all I could say of her face and person, because I sufficiently dwelt on those two articles when in them consisted all I knew of the lady. Besides you have yourself seen her, and

To gild refined gold, to paint the lily,
To throw a perfume on the violet,
To smooth the ice, or add another hue
Unto the rainbow, or with taper-light
To seek the beauteous eye of heaven to garnish,
Is wasteful, and ridiculous excess *.

I therefore proceed to what will interest you more. Though our acquaintance has not been long, yet I ought to know something of the essential parts of her character, because, since I first threw my eyes upon her, I have scarcely thought on any thing else.

Miss Clifford seems to possess as just and as comprehensive an understanding as any woman I was ever acquainted with. I mention this first, not only because good sense is the most essential article in the character of both men and women, but also, because it is

* Shakspere.

of still more importance to the latter than to the former; for a weak man is not exposed to such irretrievable ruin as a weak woman. Miss Clifford's disposition is remarkably cheerful, and she possesses that inclination to oblige which usually accompanies a cheerful disposition. She has the less merit from this inclination, indeed, because people in general are disposed to oblige handsome women, and because those who are pleased with themselves are most apt to be pleased with others. If she were plain in her face, and less elegant in her person, therefore, she would unquestionably *deserve* more praise on account of her cheerful and obliging temper. Whether in that case she would obtain it, is a different question.

When I hint that she is pleased with herself, I would have it understood that as small a portion of vanity enters into this self-satisfaction as can be supposed to belong to a very beautiful woman, who cannot help perceiving that she is an object of admiration to many men, and of envy to many women.

I suspect that miss Clifford possesses more pride than vanity ; but it is that species of pride which becomes both men and women ; and is most necessary in the latter, because the want of it, like a deficiency of good sense, exposes women to more danger than men ; for virtue is a struggle against what degrades, as well as against malevolent passions.

It is evident, however, from the whole of this young lady's deportment, that the real sources of her obliging disposition and virtuous conduct are benevolence and modesty.

I have seen it somewhere observed, that women are inferior to men in general, but superior in particular. Miss Clifford is one of the particular exceptions, if the general rule is just.

With all the gentle and amiable graces of her own sex, she possesses, in an uncommon degree, that steadiness of mind which ours affect to monopolise.

I was present with her in the play-house, when, on a false alarm of fire, many ladies screamed, and some fainted. Miss Clifford

did neither : she remained in her box till the confusion was over, without stirring, except to reach her salt-bottle to a woman who seemed ready to swoon in the pit.—As I was passing through a lane the next day, I saw her footman standing at the door of a tradesman's house, who, she understood, had been dangerously bruised in endeavouring to escape from the gallery.

The servant told me that his mistress was then with the man's wife and children. Judging, from what I had previously remarked in her character, that she would be displeased with my intrusion, I did not enter the house ; but I afterwards learnt, from the poor man himself, that she had afforded him very seasonable and liberal relief.

Naturally cheerful and gay, miss Clifford never loses that dignity of manner which prevents men of sense from all improper freedoms, and covers with confusion the fools who risk them.

I am glad that she never attempts painting. How despicable are the productions of

occasional pretenders to that charming art, when compared with the works of the artists by profession. The frames of the former are, in general, all that is worth looking at.

To excel in instrumental music is also the work of many years. I rejoice in the conviction, therefore, that miss Clifford has spent her time to better purpose. She attempts nothing more than simple airs on the harp or piano-forte, which she accompanies with her own delightful voice.

To enumerate her other accomplishments is unnecessary ; for I may say with truth, that she cannot look, or move, or speak, without conveying an impression to her advantage.

By this time, I am persuaded, you think me a little enthusiastic : you will be still more of that opinion when I acknowledge that I have attempted poetry in this lady's praise ; but I find, that, though every poet is an enthusiast, every enthusiast is not a poet. Instead of any of my own effusions, therefore, I shall, with a small variation, transcribe two stanzas from

“The Baviad,” in which my idea of miss Clifford is expressed in the genuine language of poetry.

For her has liberal Nature join'd
Her riches to the stores of art,
And added to the firmest mind
A soft and sympathising heart;

A gentle and persuasive look ;
A voice, that might with music vie ;
An air, that every gazer took,
A matchless eloquence of eye.

With regard to what you seem most anxious about, there is nothing to apprehend. To hope for success in a scheme to seduce a woman of this stamp, a man must be the most presumptuous of all coxcombs; and, were it possible for him to foresee that, by infinite art, and all the means of seduction, he would succeed, still to convey endless remorse into the breast of another, on purpose to obtain a transient gratification, would mark him for the greatest of all villains.

What there is reason more to fear is, that my suit, on the most honourable terms, wil'

be unsuccessful. I acknowledge, my dear brother, that it is already begun ; not, indeed, by any direct proposal, but by the whole of my conduct. I am convinced that miss Clifford already knows that all my old prejudices against marriage are annihilated, and that the supreme wish of my soul is to be legally united to her for life. Should that wish be accomplished, I shall think I have obtained more certain happiness than wealth, honours, or even fame, can bestow ; and nothing would afford me more satisfaction than the assurance of your approbation of my present pursuit.

I remain

Your affectionate brother,

J. MORDAUNT.

LETTER CX.

*Lady DIANA FRANKLIN to Miss HORATIA
CLIFFORD.*

MY DEAR HORATIA,

London.

I CANNOT express the satisfaction I had in perusing your last letter: all my apprehensions are vanished. I ask your pardon for having ever harboured any. I am happy at your not having left Ashwood. I should have had great uneasiness in the reflection of having brought you away, unnecessarily, at a time when you were rendering such an essential service to miss Proctor. How infinitely is she obliged to you ! I cannot suspect that any light behaviour on her part encouraged your brother to such an attempt. In rendering it fruitless, you have performed as important a service to him as to her ; for what service can be more important than preventing a man from committing an ill action ? I hope

the time is at no great distance when he will be sensible of this. How fortunate for miss Proctor that she had a discerning and virtuous friend near her ! I expect soon to hear that she is with her father. You may enjoy the additional satisfaction of knowing that you have prevented the remainder of that worthy man's life from being overwhelmed with anguish.

I can no more throw out the pleasure of the marchioness's society as a lure for your speedy return—her husband has obtained an honourable and advantageous establishment at Petersburg. A near relation of his arrived the other day, for the express purpose of conducting her to that capital ; and, a ship being ready to sail thither, she would not allow the opportunity to slip. I have just parted with her—not without tears on both sides. She is, indeed, a charming woman. She expressed the utmost regret at leaving England without seeing you. "It required," said she, "all the love I feel for my husband,

and all the obedience I owe him, to make me agree to it."

She had so many things to arrange, that she could not write to you :—she will do it from Plymouth.

Your good friend, lady Deanport, is outrageous. My lord has carried miss Almond abroad ;—perhaps I should have said the reverse ; for many people think that it is she who has carried him. She is thought to have obtained a great ascendancy over him, and to have influenced him to this step, to avoid the continual reproaches of his mother. Her ladyship's chief occupation at present is, driving about among those who call themselves her friends, to complain of her son, and abuse his companion. What marks of sympathy they show, while she is with them, I know not ; but I understand they make a jest of her affliction when she is not.

I was always shocked with Rochefoucault's horrid maxim—" that, in the adversity of our friends, there is something that does not displease us."

Lady Deanport has reason to think it true.
Thank heaven, my dear Horatia, that you
and I know it to be false !

Adieu ! my lovely friend.

D. FRANKLIN.

After you have conducted miss Proctor to
her father's, I dare say you will think it right
to return to London. Indeed I am impa-
tient, my dear, to see you. In the humour
your brother will probably be, you had best
be at a distance from him. Pray set out.

LETTER CXI.

*The Hon. JOHN MORDAUNT to
Lord MORDAUNT.*

Ashwood.

I THANK you very cordially, my dear brother, for your last kind letter * ; and will now inform you of what has happened since. I know it to be your opinion, that I am not apt to be overrun with timidity, when *tête-à-tête* with a woman ; yet I have had several opportunities of being alone with miss Clifford, all of which I have allowed to slip, without making the declaration I intended. As often as I attempted to express my sentiments, I found my mind agitated and confused, and my tongue benumbed.

The sight of beauty used to inspire me with the firmness of youth, not with the

* The letter here alluded to is omitted.

tremor of age ; and miss Clifford's is such, that

A wither'd hermit, five score winters worn,
Might shake off fifty, looking in her eye *.

Distinguished beauty never overawed me from my purpose, though of a far more audacious nature.

It is clear that the impression this lady made on me sprung from a different source. Whence did this arise ?—From my conviction of her being a woman of sense, understanding, and virtue, instead of being deficient in the two former, or one of those whom we suspect to have no very great value for the last.

The day on which I received your letter, however, Sommers being engaged in business with his steward, and miss Proctor with Mrs. Sommers, I saw, from the window of my chamber, miss Clifford turn from the end of the avenue into a foot-path leading to a small mount, from which there is an ex-

* Shakspeare.

tensive view. I guessed she was going there, because I knew that Mrs. Sommers had a partiality for the spot.—I determined to follow her, in the resolution of fully declaring my sentiments before I returned.

I have generally found a sportive manner of requesting what I am anxious about the most successful. I arranged something in that style as I walked, but forgot the whole as soon as I came in sight of her.

She was seated on a kind of bench, in a rustic style, which had been placed there by Mrs. Sommers's direction, and she seemed to be contemplating the front of an ancient tower near it.

Instead of an air decidedly sportive or serious, in a manner somewhat between the two, I addressed her, as I approached, in the words of Duncan—

“ This castle has a pleasing seat ; the air
Nimbly and sweetly recommends itself
Unto our gentle senses *.”

* Shakspere.

With equal grace and readiness she replied—

—————“ This guest of summer,
The temple-haunting martlet, does approve
By his lov'd mansionry, that the heaven's breath
Smells wooingly here *.”

“ Your favour for this seat, however,” said I, “ arises chiefly, I am convinced, from its being the work of your friend.”

“ Perhaps a great deal depends on that,” she answered; “ yet, I think, the view from this place is striking in itself; and I confess that ancient buildings in general, are interesting to me.”

“ What a contrast, however, between that before us, and the elegant commodious building which your friend at present inhabits !”

“ Not greater,” rejoined she, “ than between my friend's character and that of the mistress of the castle to which the lines you quoted were first applied.”

“ Nor so great,” said I; “ for the one is all harmony, and the other all horror.”

* Shakspere.

“ The latter recalls to our memory,” resumed she, “ those dismal times (heaven forbid they should ever return !) when family-feuds, and the spirit of vengeance, excited the inhabitants against each other, and deluged this island with blood.”

“ And the former,” rejoined I, “ brings back to our imagination that golden age, when, according to Gresset—

“ Tous dans d’innocentes délices,
Unis par des noeuds pleins d’attrait,
Paisoient leur jeunesse sans vices,
Et leur vieillesse sans regrets.”

“ It is unfortunate, however,” she replied, “ that we have the authority of history for the truth of the horrible times of massacre and rapine: they have occurred too often, and in every country; whereas, for the golden age, I fear we have only the authority of the poets; and, if I remember right, Gresset himself confesses this at the end of the Idyll from which you quote. I cannot recollect the words; but, if you can, I beg you will repeat the last stanza.”

Though it rather made against the point I wished to lead her to, on renewing the request, after a little recollection, I repeated,—

“ Ce n'est donc qu'une belle fable :
N'envions rien a nos ayeux ;
En tout tems l'homme fut coupable,
En tout tems il fut malheureux

“ Yet,” added I, “ since the poet's authority was rejected in his description of the happiness of mankind, he may be suspected of exaggeration also in his assertion of their misery.—I hope Mrs. Sommers will very soon be able to accompany you to this her favourite seat.—Is not *she* happy?”

“ The happiest person on earth,” she answered.

“ Except her husband,” said I.

“ It is difficult, indeed,” she resumed, “ to determine which is the happiest; but it is pleasing to behold two persons in a state of felicity who deserve it so well. I can hardly imagine a happier husband than colonel Sommers.”

“ I can.”

[My heart, while I pronounced this, was in more emotion than when I charged the French near Mantua.]

“Who?”

“The man who shall have the happiness of being husband to miss Clifford.”

“Upon my word that is very gallantly turned,” said she, after a movement of surprise. “And, though it was pretty obvious that a polite man might throw in such a compliment, I vow I did not foresee it.”

“I intend no compliment—I speak the genuine sentiments of my heart. If miss Clifford will condescend to accept of my hand, I shall at once be the happiest, and the most grateful husband on earth.”

[In spite of my own agitation while I spoke, I could perceive that she blushed, and was in some confusion. She soon recovered herself, and, assuming a playful manner,]

“Heaven defend me!” exclaimed she, “has Mr. Mordaunt lost his senses?”

“On the contrary, he has recovered them.”

“ What can this mean?—Do you know what your fine speeches amount to?”

[The gay air she assumed put me more at my ease, and gave me courage. Besides, the ice was broken—I recovered all my recollection.]

“ To what I wish, from the bottom of my heart, may be accepted,—a proposal of marriage.”

“ How would you look now were I to take you at your word?”

“ Like what I should *be*, the happiest man alive.”

“ And how would you look a month hence?”

“ Like a happier man than before.”

“ Why, I have been assured that you have declared an aversion against marriage these seven or eight years.”

“ I had not then the happiness of knowing miss Clifford; but now”—

“ Ay, now, no doubt, you have entirely changed your mind!”

“ Most assuredly I have; and I thank

heaven, from the bottom of my soul, that I did not change it sooner."

"Can you seriously imagine that any woman in her sound senses could trust to a man so variable?"

"A man cannot be called extremely variable," answered I, "who changes his mind only once in eight years, and then for the best reason in the world."

"Well," said she, bowing very low, "if I must not call him variable, allow me to say, that the man who compliments so readily is most exceedingly polite."

I disavowed all intention to compliment, and made the warmest protestations of love; but as love speeches are seldom amusing in the repetition, I shall spare you every thing of that kind.

She heard me for some time without any mark of displeasure; and at length said, in a tone half serious and half playful, "By your own account, Mr. Mordaunt, it has required *eight* years to bring you to this way of thinking.—I shall only ask *one* to consider

der it ; at the expiration of which, if you renew your proposal, I shall have my answer ready."

I then assured her, that your lordship was acquainted with my wishes, and had already expressed how happy you would be in the alliance ; and I was protesting a little too loudly against what she had last said, when she desired me to observe, " that we were now near the house ; and that, if I did not wish to inform the colonel's servants of the nature of our discourse, I had best drop the subject."

So saying, she skipped up stairs to her apartment, leaving me delighted with her pleasantry and good humour ; but in a state of uncertainty with regard to her real sentiments. When I know more on a subject so interesting to me, you shall : mean while I remain, my dear brother, most affectionately yours,

J. MORDAUNT.

LETTER CXII.

Miss Horatia Clifford to Lady Diana Franklin.

Ashwood.

I SEE, my dear friend, that you do not think me safe in this place ; and I believe that it is not from the rash and violent temper of my brother that you have the greatest apprehension of danger. The presence of another person keeps your affectionate heart in a tremor for your weak friend. Alas ! my dear madam, I am not without apprehension that you will think that person now more formidable than ever. The man has made me a formal proposal of marriage, and presses his suit with all the warmth of sincere passion.

Were I to tell you that I heard this proposal with pain, I should tell you a falsehood : if I said I heard it with indifference, I should say the thing that is not. I must confess,

therefore, that he has some hold of my heart. I cannot be mistaken, for no man else ever had the least.

I fear, my dear lady Diana, that this avowal will give you some uneasiness. I know that the instances of certain relations of your own, who have been rendered unhappy by husbands of that free cast of character to which you imagine Mr. Mordaunt belongs, will render you averse to his suit. It is unfortunate for him, that he can be thought to resemble those to whom I allude, in any thing ; but, without putting much stress on other obvious advantages he has over them all, every person who converses with him must acknowledge his great superiority of understanding. I know, my dear lady Diana, that you think *temper* one of the most essential articles in the character of the persons with whom we are to live ; and I am likewise sensible, that when people wish to please, it is not so easy to judge from their conversation of their temper as of their understanding. But those who are distinguish-

ed for good sense, assuredly have the best chance of being also blessed with a good temper. Of this I am certain, that the weakest people of my acquaintance are also the most peevish and ill-tempered. It must be so; for, if any person of exceeding good sense is naturally of a fretful disposition, the strength of his understanding may sooner or later correct it. Weak people, who are at all peevish and ill-tempered, have no internal spring to counteract their ill humour. An avaricious disposition is usually a peevish one; excessive love of money being a never-failing source of irquictude. From this the person in question is certainly free. The proposals he has made, and so earnestly urges to me, are complete proofs of this. If money was his object, you cannot doubt of his being able to obtain the hand of a woman with a far greater fortune than mine. Whatever you have heard to his prejudice, I must do him the justice to say, that, to me, the whole of his conduct has been, in the most delicate manner, respectful. I know that a certain friend of

yours, whose admirable judgment and serenity of temper you have often made me remark, lives in much apparent, and I hope real, happiness, with a husband far her inferior in understanding, though in many respects a worthy man. Without presuming to compare myself to that lady, I am certain that the husband, who you think makes her happy, would make me miserable. I shall never marry any man of whose honourable principles I am not convinced ; yet I would as soon be the wife of one I hated as one I despised. I may esteem the philosophic calmness, and the address of a woman of the character of Mrs. Barnet, in the romance of Edward ; but I am quite sensible that it would be out of my power to imitate her, were I placed in similar circumstances. If I ever marry, it shall be a man whose superior talents and understanding give him a title to govern me ; not one whom I should wish to govern.

Do not imagine, my dear lady Diana, that I am going to add, “ having found all the

qualities I admire in Mr. Mordaunt, I am resolved to accept of him." No ; all I resolve is, to give him no definitive answer until I have seen and conversed with you. I only beg that you will allow yourself to consider whether you have not received prejudices against that gentleman ; and that you will allow him, also, to see and converse with you on his return to London ; after which, I hope to act with your approbation, whatever determination I may come to.

Miss Proctor has been detained here longer than was intended ; but I am to accompany her to her father's the day after to-morrow. Mr. Mordaunt attends us. I could not object to this ; it would have seemed particular. The colonel did not choose to quit Juliet for two or three days ; but he intends to follow us to Heathfield, and accompany me back to Ashwood : soon after which I will set out for the Grove.

Before I had quite finished this letter, I was summoned by colonel Sommers to take a walk. Miss Proctor and Mr. Mordaunt

were of the party. We made a pretty long excursion. As we returned, the colonel led me home by a path different from what was taken by Miss Proctor and Mr. Mordaunt. The colonel took this opportunity of enlarging on his friend's good qualities. I did not know before that he was so very eloquent. I will not repeat all he said; but I cannot help wishing that you had heard it. You would, I dare say, have imputed one half to the partiality of friendship; but, if you believed the other, it would remove all your prejudices. He has the reputation, however, of adhering very strictly to truth. As soon as we entered the house, I went to my own chamber, to finish and seal this letter. Miss Proctor entered soon after, in a flurry. She told me, that when Mr. Mordaunt and she were near the house, she stood a little, admiring a noble oak that stands alone, without the gate. Twilight had begun. On turning round, she saw a man approaching, whom she soon recognised to be my brother. She immediately seized Mr. Mordaunt's arm, begged that he

would accompany her, and hurried with him within the gate. She thinks Mr. Mordaunt, though he seemed a little surprised at her hurry, did not observe what had occasioned it. I immediately went below, with a view to meet my brother. Finding that he had not entered the house, I went to the gate, and afterwards to the oak tree, where I stood for some time; but he did not appear. When I returned to my apartment, I found Miss Proctor in great agitation. She dreaded some violent scene between my brother and me. It is clear that he lurks some where in this neighbourhood, watching an opportunity of speaking to her. I am sorry to perceive that he still has too strong a hold of the lovely girl's affection. I have prevailed on her, however, to agree to our setting out early to-morrow, instead of the day after, for Heathfield. I am impatient to see her safe in her father's house. My next will be from thence.

I remain ever affectionately your

H. CLIFFORD.

LETTER CXIII.

Lord Mordaunt to the Hon. John Mordaunt.

London.

I CONGRATULATE you most cordially, my dear Jack, on the footing you are with your beloved. It is clear to me she intends to be yours. No woman of her sense and candour would have given such playful answers to the serious declarations you made. When a woman is determined to answer in the affirmative at last, she may be allowed to amuse herself, and tease her lover a little, with half-negatives ; but if she means to refuse him finally, she has no right to indulge herself in that kind of pastime. And this young lady is not the miss Clifford I take her for, and whom I shall glory in calling my sister, if she is not far above attempting it. That you are in possession of her heart and soul, my dear Jack, I have no doubt ; but I am not so absolutely sure that you will have the appro-

bation of lady Diana Franklin, on whose friendship miss Clifford puts the highest value. She is in the right :—to be the select friend of lady Diana would do honour to any woman, and is one source of the very high opinion I entertain of the merit of miss Horatia Clifford. That a woman of so very excellent a character as her ladyship should be suspected of being against you, my good friend, is not very much to your credit. However, as I am persuaded that her opposition, if she really intends any, will not be insurmountable, I once more wish you joy.

As your friend Travers hardly ever writes, it may be necessary that I should inform you what has kept him so long from you. The very day before he intended to set out for the colonel's, Mr. Plaintive was seized with a pleurisy, which required copious and frequent bleedings, blisterings, &c. Travers attended him with the most affectionate tenderness, persuaded him to dismiss the ostentatious trifler whom he has been so long in the habit of consulting when nothing ailed him, and to

put himself under the care of a practitioner equally distinguished for integrity and professional skill. In consequence of which, the most acute and dangerous stage of his complaint is now happily over ; but, as he is wonderfully weakened, Travers told me that he could not think of leaving him till he should recover his strength in a considerable degree. In the mean time he spends great part of his time in his uncle's apartment. When I called the other day he desired to see me. Travers was with him. " You remember, my lord," said Mr. Plantine, " how great an enemy my nephew used to be to physicians ; yet I am convinced that he has, by the means of a physician, saved my life."

" I am no enemy to physicians, my dear sir," replied Travers ; " but I have long been convinced that, though some people consult physicians because they have diseases, yet there are others who have diseases because they consult physicians. This last was certainly not your case in your late complaint ;

but now as that, I thank God, is removed, I hope you will have nothing farther to say to them, until you have some real disease, which it is almost impossible you can have for half a dozen years, at soonest."

"What makes you fancy so?"

"Fancy!" replied Travers. "I am sure of it: your last complaint was so violent, it searched and purified your constitution so thoroughly, that there are no seeds left from which any disease worth minding can possibly spring. All you have to do is, to eat wholesome food, take moderate exercise, and keep cheerful company."

Mr. Plaintive looked at me. "I am convinced that Dr. Travers is in the right," said I; "and I am resolved to follow his prescription myself."

"And so am I," rejoined Plaintive, "for he has already done me more good than all the doctors I have hitherto put my trust in."

I give you this detail, because it puts Travers in a new point of view, very much to his advantage; and because it will afford you

pleasure to be assured that he is on the best footing possible with his uncle; for I have long observed that you are more solicitous about his fortune than he is himself.

I remain, very affectionately, yours,

MORDAUNT.

LETTER CXIV.

Lady Diana Franklin to Miss Horatia Clifford.

MY DEAR HORATIA,

Grove.

I WAS informed of Mr. Mordaunt's proposal even before I received your last letter. Lord Mordaunt has been with me. He came from London on purpose to give me the information ; assuring me, at the same time, that nothing would make him, and many of the relations of his family, so happy, as your acceptance of his brother's hand. He added, that he knew the influence I had with you ; and, in the most polite and earnest manner, begged that I would use it in favour of his brother.

I need not tell you, my dear, for you have long perceived it, that, notwithstanding the high opinion I entertain of that gentleman's accomplishments and merit, I was impressed with the opinion that you had a probability of passing a more tranquil and happy life as

the wife of a husband of a character in some respects different from Mr. Mordaunt's.

After thanking his lordship for the honour he had done me by his visit, I said, “ whatever influence my long friendship with your parents, and your own partiality, might incline you to allow me, I should be cautious of using it in an affair of this nature, especially as I was fully convinced, and I believed your nearest relations were of the same opinion, that you yourself were by far the most competent judge.”

His lordship began to hint something respecting fortune and terms, particularly what he himself was inclined to do. I interrupted him, saying, “ that it was not necessary for his lordship to enter at all into that subject ; because I knew enough of your disposition to be convinced that what he aimed at would neither be promoted nor retarded by considerations of that nature.” I own, my dear, that, when I began this epistle, my intention was to have stated certain considerations which I thought of more importance to your

happiness than those which I prevented his lordship from entering into, and which I wished you very seriously to reflect upon before you gave a decided answer to Mr. Mordaunt ; but I have just received your letter, which proves that you have reflected on that sufficiently already ; and I have no longer any hesitation in advising you to accept of that gentleman's proposal. It must be acknowledged, that, in the whole of his conduct towards you, he has behaved with delicacy, honour, and integrity. He has never risked a word or action that could offend a woman of sense and virtue. This is a stronger proof of genuine love, in a man of his free character, than it would be in one of stricter manners. In short, my dear, I am convinced that he loves and esteems you as he ought ; and you own that he has *some* hold of your heart. Yes, my dear, he certainly has *some* hold of it ; and I am clear that he will always keep his hold. What is next to be done, therefore ? Why, you must determine to give him your hand, and engage to love, honour, and obey him, the

rest of your life.—It must be so, my dear ; there is no alternative for you. When you return from Heathfield to Ashwood, you will acquaint Mrs. Sommers that this is my advice. As soon as I know of your having done so, I should like to have the pleasure of communicating it to lord Mordaunt ; who, I believe, left me with the impression, that I did not much approve of the alliance. I have a high esteem for his lordship, and am impatient to be re-established in his good graces, which I am persuaded this intelligence will accomplish.

You will forgive me, my dear Horatia, for not being of those sentiments sooner. Old maids are apt to be prudish ; but you will see that I shall love Mr. Mordaunt as much as I always admired him, when I witness, as I am persuaded I shall, that he makes the best of wives the happiest.

Heaven bless you !

D. FRANKLIN.

LETTER CXV.

Colonel SOMMERS to Lord MORDAUNT.

Heathfield.

IN the hurried letter * I wrote immediately after my arrival at this place, I had time only to assure your lordship, that no fatal effect had happened in consequence of the unlucky incident ; and that, at all events, your brother would be found entirely blameless. I was happy to be able to give you those assurances directly, to prevent your being too much alarmed by the exaggerated and false rumours that are generally spread on such occasions. I now write better informed, and at more leisure. Miss Proctor had been staying for a considerable time at my house, during the absence of her father from his. At his return home, the young lady set out to join him ; and was accompa-

* The letter here alluded to is omitted.

nied by Miss Clifford and Mr. Mordaunt. I proposed to go to Mr. Proctor's a few days after, and return with my friend Mordaunt.

Your brother had informed Mrs. Sommers and me of his passion for Miss Clifford. Indeed we had both observed it, before he gave us that information. We were equally persuaded that the young lady entertained a partiality for him, and greatly rejoiced when he told us that your lordship approved of the sentiments he cherished for her. Mrs. Sommers was peculiarly delighted with the idea of seeing the companion of her youth, the friend she esteemed above all other women, united to the most intimate, and most honoured friend of her husband.

Fraught with those pleasing hopes, Mrs. Sommers and I were discoursing together, when I received a letter by express from Mr. Proctor, requiring my immediate attendance at Heathfield, on a business of importance.

The detail I shall now give your lordship is in consequence of a very careful investigation of all the circumstances.

I believe your lordship knows that Mr. Clifford, though possessed of several estimable qualities and accomplishments, is of a fiery and impetuous temper, which, at different periods of his life, has involved him in dangers and difficulties, and sometimes has nearly proved fatal to himself or others. The affair he had with your brother, in Germany, was of this nature. Mr. Mordaunt is as entirely free from blame on this occasion as he was on that, which threatened very dreadful consequences. The recollection of how much he was to blame in that affair might have rendered Mr. Clifford more circumspect on the present occasion ; but, by a strange fatality, it had a different effect. Previous to his leaving London, he had a disagreement with his sister, on a subject with which I fancy your lordship is in some degree acquainted. He came to the country with unfavourable impressions of your brother. An incident that occurred at my house increased these to a rancorous degree ; though, had he taken the trouble to examine the case, and weigh

the circumstances, with coolness, he would have seen, that those which his disturbed imagination imputed to design, were accidental.

Mr. Clifford was distractedly fond of miss Proctor. There is reason to believe she did not discourage his passion. When his sister arrived at my house, she discovered that there was a correspondence between them, which she thought might prove dangerous to her young friend ; and therefore prevailed on her to break it off. This exasperated Clifford more than ever against his sister, who, he imagined, had interfered at the instigation of Mr. Mordaunt, whom he suspected to be fond of miss Proctor. And he also imputed her sudden coldness to himself to a rising passion for your brother. All those loose and incoherent conjectures his irritated and jealous imagination linked together into a chain of probability, which acquired additional strength when he heard that miss Clifford had conducted miss Proctor to her father's, accompanied by your brother.

When he was ruminating on these incidents, a letter was delivered to him, which seemed to agitate him in a violent degree. He wrote to your brother, desiring an interview with him at a place which he mentioned. He sent this letter by his servant, who is now here, and from whom I learnt this and other circumstances. Who the letter was from, the servant has no knowledge nor suspicion; but it is clear, from the effect it produced on Mr. Clifford, that the import of it was to irritate him against your brother; and very probably it is the production of an inveterate enemy of both.

This letter was delivered to Mr. Mordaunt at a time when his mind was so much occupied with the charms of miss Clifford, that he was not struck with the style; which, at another time, he would probably have been; and he found himself so agreeably engaged, that he could not think of leaving his company. He therefore answered, “ that he wished the meeting to be postponed to some

future day, unless Mr. Clifford could conveniently come to Heathfield."

The jaundiced eye of Mr. Clifford viewed this as a new insult. He loaded his pistols, mounted his horse, and rode to Mr. Proctor's. He asked for Mr. Mordaunt; and, being told that he was with miss Proctor, he desired to be shown into his apartment, and that Mr. Mordaunt might be informed "that a gentleman wished to speak with him."

As soon as your brother entered the room, Mr. Clifford bolted the door, pulled two pistols out of his pocket, laid them on the table, and said—"They are both loaded, sir; take your choice, and let me have immediate satisfaction."

"Satisfaction for what?"

"You well know for what, sir. Come, sir, which do you choose?"

"I choose neither."

"By God, sir, you shall take one."—So saying, Mr. Clifford took up one of the pistols, and went to the wall, desiring your brother to do the same, that as soon as he should pro-

nounce he was ready, they might fire together.

"Mr. Clifford," said your brother, "you are one of the last men on earth against whom I would fire a pistol."

"That won't do, sir.—By heaven! one or other of us shall not go alive out of this room."

"You ought to recollect that you were under some such mistake as this once before."

"I do recollect all I owe you, sir, and am come to settle the account."

"You have been deceived by some villain, Mr. Clifford."

"I know I have.—D—n you, sir, take the pistol.—We shall be interrupted," added he, hearing some noise at the door; then, advancing to the table, and taking up the pistol which still lay upon it, he held it with the but-end to Mr. Mordaunt, saying—"Take the pistol, sir, and retire to the wall, as I shall; for, by heavens! I am not to be talked from my purpose."

"Nor am I to be bullied from mine," replied your brother.

"Sir, I am determined to have satisfaction," cried Mr. Clifford with fury, and striking the table with the pistol :—at that instant it went off, and shot him through the body.

The company in the parlour had been informed, after Mr. Mordaunt left them, that it was Mr. Clifford who had sent for him. This disturbed the two ladies. Mr. Proctor asked wherefore they seemed agitated ; but, before they could give any explanation, the report of the pistol was heard. The women screamed, and Mr. Proctor rushed to the room where the gentlemen were. Some servants had already burst into it. Mr. Clifford lay on the floor —a considerable vessel was torn—he bled profusely.

Miss Clifford's maid having looked in, and seen him in that state, exclaimed, as she returned—"Alas ! he is dead."

"Who?" said miss Clifford, who advanced pale and trembling through the passage.

The maid, perceiving the situation in which her mistress was, and dreading that it would overpower her entirely to be told at once that it was her brother, softly answered —*Mr. Mordaunt*.

Miss Clifford's limbs failed her: she was supported from falling by her maid, and carried, in a state of insensibility, to her chamber.

Mr. Clifford also fainted, from loss of blood, as he was carried to his bed. A surgeon had been found immediately;—his report was unfavourable.

When miss Clifford recovered her senses, she desired to speak with Mr. Proctor. She laid hold of his hand, and said—“I hope you have allowed the unhappy man to escape.”

“He refuses to escape,” replied Mr. Proctor; “and earnestly intreats that he may be permitted to see you.”

“Oh! no, no;—never, never. Let him escape;—let him fly.”

“ He declares himself to be most unfortunate, but asserts his innocence.”

“ Innocence ! My God !” exclaimed she. “ Did he not come hither ?—Did he not send a message ?—Has he not murd—— ? Oh, dreadful !—Has he not killcd the most generous, the most accomplished, the most spirited, of the British youth. Every voice, every heart, will be against his assaſſ—. Oh ! I know not what I say.—Dear, good Mr. Proctor, persuade the rash, the wretched man, to fly directly.”

Your brother, with the surgeon, had come to the door of the room with Mr. Proctor, but stood without when that gentleman entered. They had heard what had passed : but Mr. Mordaunt, having mistaken the import of miss Clifford’s words, could restrain himself no longer. He entered ; and, addressing himself to her, who sat on the bed, said—“ I am, indeed, wretched, madam ; but wretched by an accident of which I am guiltless. I ſent no message. The last man I could have thought of injuring is the bro-

ther of miss Clifford ; the person on earth most solicitous for his recovery is myself. But, whatever happens, whatever appearances may be against me, I will not fly : that, perhaps, is the only thing you could exact, that I would not comply with. Flight or concealment are measures I never will adopt : they give the impression of guilt—I am conscious of innocence. Whether that can be made clear to the eye of law I know not ; but I will abide the trial, and leave the issue to Providence."

Miss Clifford was transfixed with amazement while your brother spoke. From staring at him, she turned her eyes, with a look of wildness, to Mr. Proctor, and others present, saying—" What does this mean ?—Has not there been murder ?—Who is dead ?"

" Be composed, my dear young lady," said Mr. Proctor : " nobody is dead. Your brother has been wounded, but is not dead : perhaps he may recover : there still are hopes."

" My brother !" exclaimed she.

“ Yes,” rejoined Mr. Proctor; “ I thought you had known that it was your brother who was wounded: your great grief convinced me that you knew it was him; but perhaps you have been under a mistake.”

The surgeon from whom I had this account said—“ That miss Clifford’s face, which was before remarkably pale, became of a crimson hue; while her eyes, that had been fixed on Mr. Proctor, were thrown down. But he, without attending to her confusion, added—“ Perhaps you thought that he had killed or wounded Mr. Mordaunt.”

At this observation miss Clifford threw her face on the pillow. Your brother stepped out of the room. The surgeon said—“ As the young lady seems indisposed, she had best be left alone;” and immediately withdrew with Mr. Proctor.

For some hours after this, nobody was admitted into miss Clifford’s chamber, though she sent her maid with frequent inquiries concerning the state of her brother; and afterwards desired to see the surgeon himself, who

has the reputation of being a man of great professional skill, and is certainly a man of excellent sense. As he spoke dubiously respecting his patient's recovery, she hinted, not without embarrassment, that she was surprised that he did not persuade Mr. Mordaunt to withdraw. The surgeon said—“ That he believed the circumstances of the case were not fully understood; but he plainly saw that Mr. Mordaunt would not conceal himself.” The young lady remained silent, and seemed in deep reflection a considerable time; after which she suddenly roused herself, as if from a dream, and asked after her friend miss Proctor. She was told, “ that this young lady was in the utmost affliction, and unable to leave her bed-chamber.”

The account I have given of the circumstances that passed between your brother and Mr. Chifford, before any other person entered the room, I had from Mr. Mordaunt himself. To every person, thoroughly acquainted with his character, the account he gives will

convey as much certainty as if they had witnessed the whole scene. As I wished him to withdraw, however, and remain concealed till Mr. Clifford's fate should be known, I put him in mind that his own account of the transaction would have little weight in a court of justice.—“I know it,” replied he; “but it will have weight with my friends; and, at all events, I never will withdraw or conceal myself for a single moment.”

Your lordship will make lady Diana Franklin and Mr. Darnley acquainted with the whole, or as much of this detail as you judge proper. Miss Clifford was disposed to have written to them, but found herself incapable.

I need hardly tell your lordship how very sincerely I sympathise with you on an event which obscures and renders dubious so fair and promising a prospect of happiness. I, as well as your lordship, had long regretted my friend's prejudice against marriage. We both rejoiced in the hope of seeing it removed, by his union with one of the most accomplished,

and, in every respect, one of the most agreeable women in England.

As the surgeon was again expected, I kept this letter unsealed until his arrival; in the hope that his prognostic would be more favourable than formerly.—I have just seen him ; and should, with great pleasure, have sent the news to your lordship, had my wishes been gratified.

I am, my lord,
Your most obedient, humble servant,

RICHARD SOMMERS.

LETTER CXVI.

Miss Horatia Clifford to Lady Diana Franklin.

Heathfield.

Oh ! my dear lady Diana, what a dreadful incident !—Colonel Sommers assures me that you know all the particulars.—How impatient was I for my brother's return to England !—Rash, headstrong man ! he would not listen to the voice of truth and reason.—Nobody was to blame but himself.—It was all owing to his rashness.—Be sure, my dear lady Diana, to convince my aunt, and above all, Mr. Darnley, of this.

My last letter betrayed my whole heart. What levity, you must think, to be so captivated with any person on so short an acquaintance ! Yet much had I heard of him. It was said, that, like Harry Piercy,

“ He was the mark and glafs, copy and book,
That fashioned others * ”

* Shakespeare.

Even my dear father had contributed to give me a high idea of Mr. Mordaunt. On his name being mentioned, I once heard him say—"There is something striking in that young fellow: though he leads the fashion, he is no coxcomb. Though men love those who admire them, more than those they admire, yet he is generally liked; and, though often at court, he can neither smile without being pleased, nor carefs without affection. At his time of life it is not surprising that he should sacrifice a little to vanity, and seem pleased with the distinctions of dress and equipage; but his mind was formed for more vigorous and more generous emotions."

I formed a very pleasing idea of the person of whom I had heard so much. None of the young men who had professed a partiality for me came up to the idea I had formed. From the day I first met him at the marchioness's, I thought Mr. Mordaunt did.—Indeed, my dear lady Diana, I never intended to conceal any thing from

you ; but could I inform you of a chimera, which I was ashamed of having indulged ? My letter discovered more than I myself knew. Now it is known to the surgeon, to Mr. Proctor, to—every one. There was a false report—it was thought that Mr. Mordaunt was killed. It was natural that I should be much affected. He was most averse to injure my brother. He had borne insult calmly : but I did not know that circumstance then.—No, no, it cannot be concealed. They must all have observed that I was more violently affected when I thought that my brother had killed him, than when I was told the truth.—Alas ! my dear lady Diana, the wound is mortal. I see plainly the surgeon thinks so. Mr. Mordaunt will be considered by the world as his murderer : this raises an unsurmountable barrier. I know the world is mistaken—I know I have more reason to esteem that gentleman than ever ; because he never gave such a proof of his regard for me, as by the for-

bearance and command of temper he manifested in the affair with my brother.

But there is no proof of this forbearance but his own declaration.

Alas ! the declaration of a man of strict honour, one who would not stoop to the meanness of falsehood, even to save his life, will not be truly estimated by those who make false or evasive declarations to serve every purpose of conveniency.

The majority of the world will never be convinced, therefore, that he did not fire the pistol ; far less, that he never took it into his hand : of course he will be considered as the killer, if not the murderer, of Mr. Clifford.—Can his sister, the person who succeeds to his estate, ever become the wife of the man who—Oh, horrible !—who is looked on as his assassin ?

To avoid the censure or reproaches of the world, I could not be induced to commit a crime ; but a sacrifice of this nature I cannot help considering as a duty.—Pray, my

dearest lady Diana, write—I intreat you write—advise me: I will do whatever you advise. You cannot imagine how very miserable I am.—I was called to William just now: he looks as pale as if he were actually dead; and still I think he cannot recover. Poor William!—No; never, never, shall I be the wife of Mr. Mordaunt.

They thought William wished to speak to me. When I came to his bed-side, he began to slumber.

Adieu,

My dear lady Diana!

H. CLIFFORD.

LETTER CXVII.

Colonel SOMMERS to Lord MORDAUNT.

Heathfield.

You judged right, my lord: the favourable accounts in my three last short letters * were really written under an apprehension that I should be obliged to retract them. This discouraged me from entering into any detail. I have no such apprehension now: the surgeon speaks with confidence of Mr. Clifford's recovery; all hope of which, the direction that, he supposed, the ball had taken, and the symptoms that immediately followed, almost entirely excluded. The most alarming symptoms gradually abated: he became free from fever; but still seemed so languid that I delayed writing very circumstantially,

* All the letters written in the interval between Colonel Sommers's last and this one are omitted. They turned entirely on the state of Mr. Clifford's wound and health.

until I could write with certainty. Mr. Clifford gave no account of the transaction : he seemed disposed to maintain a gloomy kind of silence. Few questions were put to him. The surgeon had declared, that speaking, and whatever increased the motion of the lungs, was improper. But he had some idea of what was going on in the family from the whispers that he overheard in his bed-chamber. Those which interested him most regarded miss Proctor. He learnt that she had been greatly shocked at the first account of his being wounded, and that she was still in violent distress on his account. At one time, a little after midnight, when he was thought to be asleep, he heard the door of his room gently opened, and very particular and anxious inquiries concerning his health made from the nurse who sat up with him : he recognised the voice of miss Proctor, as he afterwards told the nurse, who thought the discovery gave him very great pleasure. And, as the favourable turn in his case began about

that time, she is convinced that it was wholly owing to it.

The surgeon, as I informed your lordship, is a man of sense and discretion. He has known Mr. Clifford since he was a boy, possesses his confidence, and has considerable influence with him. When he found his patient in so promising a way, he asked how he came to be so strongly convinced that Mr. Mordaunt had acted injuriously to him.

Mr. Clifford, by way of answer, took from his pocket-book, which lay on his pillow, the letter which had produced so much mischief, and desired the surgeon to read it. I have since seen it : there is no name subscribed.

The writer affects to be warmly interested in the honour of Mr. Clifford ; expresses surprise that he seems to be unacquainted with the artifices of a certain person who had lately come to Ashwood, who had before seduced his mistress from him, afterwards transferred her to a Bohemian, and ever

since laughed at his credulity. The writer next insinuates, that the same person who had duped him so egregiously in Germany had, since his return to England, acquired despotic sway over the mind of miss Clifford ; that it was through his influence she had refused an honourable, and most advantageous, marriage ; that he had followed her to the North, with an ostentation injurious to her character ; and, since his arrival there, had, from sheer vanity, interposed between Mr. Clifford and a woman he loved, flattering himself with a fresh triumph, and that he had influence enough with miss Clifford, in the infatuated state of her mind, to render her subservient to his views.

The surgeon, who was in a very different state of mind from what Mr. Clifford had been in when he received the letter, had no sooner perused it than he exclaimed, “ Good Heaven ! is it possible, that, deceived by such a miserable imposture as this, you should have risked putting to death one of the noblest gentlemen in England ; rendering your sister

miserable ; driving a lovely and virtuous girl to despair ; and, at the same time, accomplishing the wishes of some vindictive wretch, who holds you and Mr. Mordaunt in equal detestation, and whose object evidently is the destruction of both ?”

This made the stronger impression on Mr. Clifford, because, not only his own reflections, since he had had time to cool, but what he had overheard and observed during his confinement, already suggested to him that there was a probability of his having acted rashly.

Before he could make any reply to the surgeon’s observations, Mr. Proctor entered, and, with all the fervour and simplicity of that benevolence and truth which belong to his character, congratulated Mr. Clifford on the favourable account he had received from the nurse ; “ which,” added he, addressing the surgeon, “ I hope you, sir, will now confirm, by declaring your patient out of danger.”

To this the surgeon no sooner assented, than the good man exclaimed, “ God Almighty be praised !” Then, turning to Mr.

Clifford, he said, “ You cannot imagine, sir, how very deeply both my daughter and I have been affected by your illness. As for me, this was naturally to be expected, on account of the great respect and veneration I have for the memory of your parents : my daughter’s concern is as easily accounted for by those who know her affection for miss Horatia Clifford, whom she loves as a sister, and far better than some sisters of my acquaintance love each other. I will, therefore, be myself the bearer of the joyful tidings of your being out of danger ; which, I am sure, will make my dear Mary a happy woman.”

He had no sooner left the room, than Mr. Clifford, who had been much affected, turned towards the window, to conceal the tears with which his eyes were suddenly filled. The surgeon observed this, and withdrew.

Mis Clifford meeting him in the passage, said, “ she hoped all her brother’s good symptoms continued.” —“ Not only so,” replied the surgeon, “ but I have just observed

a new one, and a most excellent symptom it is. Pray, my good lady, do you go and make the most of it ; you are more likely to turn it to account than I am.” So saying, he left her abruptly. Though miss Clifford did not understand what he meant, she proceeded directly to her brother’s apartment.

She could not have chosen a more favourable moment for the accomplishment of her own wishes ; for she found him meditating on the charms of miss Proctor, filled with remorse for his own intended perfidy, and for the rashness of his late conduct.

Meanwhile the surgeon found me with Mr. Mordaunt. He had the anonymous letter in his hand, which he showed us directly.—“ Some pains have been taken,” said your brother, “ to disguise this hand : but I know it, notwithstanding.” —“ It is the fabrication of calumny and malice, in conjunction with cowardice, I dare swear,” said I.

"It is the work of a woman," said Mr. Mordaunt.

—“*Mulier sævissima tunc est,
Cum stimulus odio pudor admovet **.

"What surprises me is, that a composition such as this, in which malignity and meanness are so apparent, should have imposed on any man of sense."

"Some men of tolerable good sense have intolerably bad tempers, which hurry them into acts of fury and madness," rejoined the surgeon.

Your brother then told him "that he wished to speak to his patient, as soon as it could be done consistent with his safety; that what he had to say would probably afford him satisfaction." "In that case," said the surgeon, "the sooner the better." However, finding that miss Clifford was still with her brother, he afterwards told Mr. Mordaunt, "that, on reflection, he thought his seeing Mr. Clifford had best be postponed till the day following."

* Juvenal,

It was evident that something highly agreeable had passed between miss Clifford and her brother. Joy sparkled in every feature of her fine countenance, as she tripped from her brother's room to that of miss Proctor,—the only time I saw her that evening, which she passed entirely with that young lady. The surgeon spent the evening in Mr. Clifford's chamber. I passed great part of it with your brother and Mr. Proctor. The latter seemed more thoughtful than usual until the Gazette was brought, when he expressed much satisfaction, saying, “ He was certain the news would be good, because it was an extraordinary one ;” and, with an air of impatience, begged me to read it aloud. Your brother and I thought he was listening with great attention ; but, when I had got about half through the Gazette, Mr. Proctor interrupted me with the following observations : “ I could have sworn that it was impossible for any body to have given my daughter a piece of news that would afford her more satisfaction or pleasure,—for I take pleasure and

satisfaction to be much the same,—than that which I told her ; namely, that her friend, miss Clifford's brother, whose illness affected her so much, was now entirely out of danger : and I acknowledge that she did rejoice at the tidings ; but, after all, I could discern a degree of anxiety in her countenance. And this continued, in spite of all I could say, until miss Clifford, who had been a long time shut up with her brother, came, and had some private conversation with her. Since which she seems quite happy, and has not the least appearance of anxiety ; though I am certain that miss Clifford had nothing to tell her but what I had told her a little before. But there is no such thing as understanding women : do you think there is, gentlemen?"

To this question neither your brother nor I making an immediate answer, Mr. Proctor proceeded. "I first made the discovery in my late wife's time. It has been since confirmed by the conduct of a young woman who shall be nameless, in whom I took an in-

terest ; and now it is confirmed again by my own daughter, that women are quite unintelligible. I dare say colonel Sommers, who is a married man, has found the same. As for you, Mr. Mordaunt, you have resolved never to marry ; so the remark does not interest you so much ; yet, if you should chance to change your mind (for men sometimes alter their minds as well as women, I would advise you to follow my plan ; which is, to make your wife and daughter as happy as you are able, without attempting to understand them : that you would find labour in vain ; for, though women undoubtedly are the most delightful of all creatures, it must be acknowledged, at the same time, that they are the most incomprehensible."

When Mr. Proctor had given your brother this piece of advice, and finished his remark, he rose, begged that we would excuse him, as he had letters to write, and then withdrew, without hearing any more of the Gazette Extraordinary.

Next morning the surgeon, having informed your brother that Mr. Clifford had passed a good night, and seemed in the most hopeful way of being soon perfectly re-established, they went to his apartment, and I attended them.

With that engaging ease which always accompanies your brother, as if there had been no misunderstanding between them, —“ What can you and I, Mr. Clifford, have done to Mrs. Demure,” said he, “ that could prompt her to write such an infernal letter.”

“ I am convinced of the falsehood and diabolical tenor of the letter,” said Mr. Clifford, “ and I am extremely sorry that I ever could be imposed on by it as I was; but I had no suspicion of its being written by Mrs. Demure.”

“ I have no doubts on the subject,” replied Mr. Mordaunt. “ The awkward endeavour to disguise the hand, which to me is quite visible, would remove them, if any existed.”

“ Here is an epistle of hers,” said Mr.

Clifford, written to me, soon after my last arrival from abroad;—let us compare this with the other."

The comparison being made, it evidently appeared that the letters of the anonymous epistle were generally disguised; but sometimes they were formed in their natural shape; and, as often as this seemed to be the case, the unconstrained letters of the anonymous epistle appeared to be the twin brothers of those in that which Mr. Clifford produced.

The similitude struck us all; but Mrs. Demure was supposed to be in London—the Liverpool post-mark was on the cover. While we were still continuing the comparison, a letter was delivered to your brother, that came by express from Mr. Travers.—I inclose a copy.

‘ DEAR MORDAUNT,

‘ I was stepping into a post-chaise, to set out for Alnwood, when I was informed that

my uncle had been much indisposed the preceding night.

‘ However impatient I was to accept of Sommers’s invitation, I found Mr. Plaintive too seriously ill to think of leaving him; especially under the care of Dr. Owlet, whose constant affectation of wisdom forms such a presumption of folly, and whom I have seen prescribe such quantities of drugs, for imaginary distempers, that I cannot believe he knows how to cure real ones.

‘ On this occasion my poor uncle suffered under a severe one indeed. I persuaded him to call our friend ——, by whose skill, I thank God, he is now pretty well reinstated.

‘ He became impatient to return to his own house in ——shire; but, until he should have strength for so long a journey, he was advised to take short jaunts near town. I usually accompanied him. As we returned, one day, the chariot was stopped by two highwaymen. Had the scoundrels been satisfied with our money, they might have carried it off in safety; but one of them insisted

on having Mr. Plaintive's pocket-book ; threatening him, in a brutal manner, because it was not delivered with all the expedition he expected. This provoked me to fire a pistol, which I had concealed under my coat, and which I should not have used if the fellow had behaved more civilly. He fell from his horse. His companion, seeing a post-chaise coming, rode away.

' The bone of the wounded man's arm was shattered by the ball. He was carried to a cottage near the road. I advanced a little money, that he might be taken care of, and promised to send a surgeon from town. At his return, the surgeon informed me that the man suffered greatly ; that he knew me, and desired very earnestly to speak with me. I was prevented from going the next day, but I went the day after. The substance of what he said to me was, ' that he had heard of two men being taken up for abusing, wounding, and attempting to rob lady Blunt ; being conscious that he and another had committed that crime, and thinking himself dy-

ing, he wished to appease his conscience, and prevent the condemnation of innocent people, by making this confession ; that he had been drawn into the crime by a man who lived as butler with Mrs. Demure ; that the same man had lately engaged him to go, in the stage-coach, all the way to Liverpool, where he was to make inquiry for a certain foreigner, and deliver a letter to him ; on his arrival, he received no intelligence of the foreigner ; but another letter had been given to him by the same butler, that he was very earnestly and repeatedly desired to put into the post-office as soon as he should arrive at Liverpool, which he had done accordingly. This last letter was addressed to William Clifford, Esq. Northumberland ; that as he had heard from a servant of colonel Sommers's that Mr. Clifford had fought a duel with Mr. Mordaunt immediately after receiving a letter, he conceived that the letter he put into the post-office might be that which gave rise to the quarrel ; and he thought himself in duty

bound to give me this information, because he knew I was a friend of Mr. Mordaunt, and would make the proper use of it, if any use could be made.'

' I have long had an ill opinion of madam Demure. I know she harboured malice against you. If the letter in question had any tendency to produce a quarrel between you and Clifford, I strongly suspect it to be from her; the author of malicious anonymous letters is capable of any baseness. The contriver of the attack on lady Blunt may, with great probability, be considered as the instigator of your affair with Clifford. At all events, I thought it right to send you this intelligence.

' As for the poor devil who is wounded, I told him he might make his conscience easy with regard to the two men who had been taken up, because they were already liberated. The man expressed so much satisfaction at hearing this, that I assured him that neither Mr. Plaintive nor I intended to prosecute him for the robbery. He has suffered pretty

smartly already. Curse the pocket-book! I now wish I had let it go—it has been found necessary to amputate the poor fellow's arm. My uncle, who never could bear to throw away money on any thing but doctors, remarked, ‘that to hang this man now would make what he intends to give to the surgeon so much lost money, and render an operation, that has been successfully performed, good for nothing.’

‘ I had every thing prepared for accompanying you abroad, if you had thought that measure necessary; and still am ready, at a minute’s warning.

‘ Yours,

‘ T. TRAVERS.

‘ P. S. I have broken up the seal to inform you, that I have this instant heard that the man’s confession regarding Mrs. Demure (for he had made it to others as well to me) had reached her ears. The butler has disappeared. She has offered a reward for his discovery, which has had no effect, except to convince the world that she thinks him in some very safe lurking place.’

You perceive, my lord, that this letter could not fail to remove all obscurity and doubt. Mr. Clifford was peculiarly shocked : he remained silent, with his eyes fixed on the ground, some seconds after the letter was read, and then exclaimed—“ What a dupe, what a despicable tool, have I been to this horrid woman !”

“ We have all been dupes in our turn, I fear,” said your brother. “ Don’t you remember, Sommers, what a dupe I was made, and how very near I was brought to ruin, by a woman less artful than Mrs. Demure ?”

“ You are a generous man, Mr. Mordaunt,” said Clifford with fervour : “ I am filled with remorse at the recollection of my behaviour. I am sensible, that to your forbearance, to your magnanimity, I owe my not being at present a corsé, or the most miserable of living men.—My gratitude shall be endless.—May I ever expect any share in your friendship ?—Can you forget ?”—

Mr. Clifford spoke with such earnestness and rapidity, as for some time prevented your

brother from uttering a word. But here, seizing Mr. Clifford's hand in an affectionate manner, he pronounced with energy—" Be assured, my dear Clifford, that the earnest wish of my heart is to live with you, not only as a friend, but as a *brother*."

They embraced.—At that instant the surgeon, who I believe knew that miss Clifford and miss Proctor were at the door, opened it, and they both entered.

It is not possible for me, my dear lord, to do justice to this scene. Never did I witness such genuine expressions of happiness as in the countenances of the two ladies when they saw your brother and Clifford in each other's arms.. Never were features more admirably formed for the expression of happiness than theirs.

A stranger coming into the room would have been warmed with a glow of pleasure at the sight. You may imagine what it communicated to a heart so deeply interested as mine. The two ladies exchanged looks of affectionate sympathy and joy.—“ Your friend, colonel

Sommers," said Mr. Clifford, is the most noble-minded, the most generous of men." Then, addressing his sister, he added—"What think you, Horatia?"

At this sudden question, a very deep blush overspread her charming countenance.

"What think you, my dear Horatia?" he repeated, drawing her gently towards him. Her head leaned on his shoulder, when she said, but so softly as to be heard only by him—"He knows what I think."

"He declares," resumed Mr. Clifford, "that it is his earnest wish to be united to me, not only as a friend, but as a *brother*."

"It is the most earnest wish of my soul," said your brother.

"*You* do not object, my dear Horatia?" said Miss Proctor, taking hold of her hand, and smiling in her face.

"Not," replied Miss Clifford, "provided you, my dear Mary, do not object to being united to me, not only as a friend, but as a *sister*."

"And that," exclaimed Mr. Clifford, "is the supreme wish of *my* soul!"

"*Are we to be sisters, my dear?*" repeated miss Clifford.

Miss Proctor, with a look of inexpressible affection, held forth her hand to her friend.

"*Nay,*" rejoined miss Clifford, "*to prove that you agree to the condition, it is not to me, but to this gentleman, that you must give your hand*"—conducting miss Proctor's hand, at the same instant, to her brother, who saluted it with rapture; then, seizing his sister's hand, he added—"And, to make me brother to the man I love and esteem above all mankind, it is to this gentleman, my dear Horatia, that you must give yours."

"There is no need of force, brother," said she, extricating her hand from his, and, with inimitable gracefulness, delivering it to Mr. Mordaunt."

At that moment miss Proctor was told her father inquired for her.—Miss Clifford withdrew with her.

"In my life," said the surgeon, "I never was witness to so delightful a scene; which,

I am convinced, is only the prologue to much permanent happiness ; but, to render it more secure, I must inform Mr. Clifford—(as for ~~Mr.~~ Mordaunt, I have no title to interfere with his arrangements)—but I must remind *you*, Mr. Clifford, that you are my patient ; and no person, under my care, ever presumed to marry without my approbation : this, I plainly perceive, you will have at no great distance of time ; but, until that time arrives, I expect that you will remain a bachelor."

Miss Proctor, being sensible that what had passed should be communicated without delay to her father, and having some reluctance to do it herself, devolved the task on miss Clifford. He, *whose nature is so far from doing harm that he suspects none* *, had never the least idea of Clifford's design on his daughter, nor of her partiality for him. He was therefore a good deal surprised, but not at all displeased, when he understood that Mr. Clifford had actually proposed mar-

* Shakespeare

riage, and that the proposal was agreeable to her.

Mr. Clifford, not knowing that his sister had anticipated him, and finding Mr. Proctor alone, began to broach the same subject to him. But the old gentleman, who dislikes all superfluous discourse from any mouth but his own, interrupted him, saying—"To save you trouble, Mr. Clifford, I must tell you that I am already informed of your proposal of marriage to my daughter; which, by-the-bye, you ought to have communicated, in the first place, to me; but, passing over that, I will acknowledge that few things could be more honourable, and none more agreeable, to me, than having your father and mother's son, the brother of miss Horatia Clifford, for my son-in-law, all three being characters of such distinguished worth, that their alliance would do credit to the first family in the land. And, were I inclined to make any objection, you may depend upon it that it would be founded on considerations, which, in civility to

you, particularly in my own house, I decline mentioning ; for, in spite of all that has happened, I cannot help trusting that the offspring of such worthy parents will ultimately turn out a man of worth : therefore, sir, I will tell you at once, that, since you are agreeable to Mary, you are not disagreeable to me :—and I will tell you farther, that, on the day of your marriage, you shall have one half of my fortune (for the other half is more than sufficient for me) : the residue, you, and your children by her, shall have at my death. But the most precious treasure in my power to bestow is my daughter herself, whom I pray God to bless, by making you a husband deserving of her.”

Mr. Clifford seemed no way dissatisfied with this harangue ; and, from that moment, harmony and happiness reigned in the mansion of Heathfield.

Mr. Proctor and I, being rather neglected by your brother and miss Clifford, as well as by Mr. Clifford and miss Proctor, have frequent *tête-à-têtes* with each other, in which

we are seldom interrupted by any of the persons above mentioned.

I am pleased to find myself a favourite with this good man, who, according to Shakspeare's expression, in all his actions and words, is as downright and *true as truth's simplicity*.

All the company being assembled this morning at breakfast, a thought seemed suddenly to strike Mr. Proctor, who, drawing me to the most remote corner of the room, said, in a kind of half whisper, " You must remember, colonel, what I told you lately concerning the incomprehensibility of women,—nothing can prove this better than the conduct of my own daughter Mary,—you see how much attached she is to Mr. Clifford. So indeed he seems to be to her; but that is not to be wondered at, for every body is fond of Mary. But, though she was acquainted with him from her childhood, she never showed any partiality to him until he was shot through the body, and greatly weakened by the loss of blood. Now, what the girl could find in

these two circumstances to engage her fancy, is, I must confess, what I cannot comprehend.”.

This long and circumstantial epistle will, I hope, my lord, compensate for the brevity of those I wrote from the period at which we began to entertain hopes of Mr. Clifford’s recovery ;—that being now ascertained, I intend to leave this, for Ashwood, to-morrow—Miss Clifford and your brother accompany me. Mrs. Sommers, in a letter I have just received, desires me to inform you, that she flatters herself with the honour of a visit from your lordship, and that she has a tolerably commodious apartment prepared for you. You will find it difficult ever to make a journey on a happier occasion, to join a happier society, or one from which you will receive a more cordial welcome.

I am your lordship’s

most obedient servant,

RICHARD SOMMERS.

THE reader now foresees the marriage of Mr. Mordaunt to miss Clifford, and that of Mr. Clifford to miss Proctor, which took place about a month after; events which were the sources of happiness, not only to the parties themselves, but likewise to their friends, and to many of their acquaintance.

When lady Diana Franklin became more intimately acquainted with Mr. Mordaunt, and saw his continued affection, and the just estimation in which he held the fine qualities of his wife; when her ladyship also perceived the happiness and exultation of her young friend, from the consciousness of having a husband who met her fondness with equal affection, and of whom she was as proud as she was fond; she could not refrain from exclaiming, one day, when they were alone—"What short-fighted creatures we are! Did I not endeavour, my dearest Horatia, to prevent the woman I love best from becoming the happiest woman on earth?"

Mr. Proctor is equally satisfied with his son-in-law, on whose character his own reflections on the adventure at Heathfield, and the mild complacent temper of his wife, made a very favourable alteration. As Mr. Proctor was a stranger to violent passions, had found his fortune continually increasing through his own industry; and, above all, as he was a man of benevolence and undeviating integrity, it is highly to be presumed that he had lived a very happy life; yet, when he saw the mutual affection, confidence, and cor-

diality, that existed between Mr. Clifford and his daughter, he declared that he never had been so happy before.

Those who feel themselves happy are generally satisfied with silent enjoyment, without troubling themselves with long communications to their friends. The unhappy or discontented are more apt to make frequent demands on the sympathy of their acquaintance (even when they require no other species of relief), by circumstantial, and sometimes exaggerated narratives of their misfortunes. After the two events above mentioned, though the different families of this society passed much of their time together, their correspondence by letters was less frequent and less interesting. It is not thought proper to publish any other of their letters, except the following.

LETTER CXVIII.

*The Honourable JOHN MORDAUNT, Esq. to Lord
MORDAUNT.*

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I AM glad you have prevailed on lady Blunt to decline prosecuting the butler;—was it to be expected that a man in his situation could resist the persuasions of such a woman as Mrs. Demure? Besides, there is no great satisfaction in the punishment of underling agents, when the leading criminal escapes.

But though she has escaped to the continent, she has not escaped punishment; her real character is known to all the world; a whole life of painful hypocrisy is now rendered useless to her; infamy has attended her across the sea. She must have found herself as much shunned in Frankfort as she was in England before she could determine to form the connexion you mention with Grindill.—

though, if she knew that he was enraged against lady Deanport, that would be an inducement; but, whatever it was, I am convinced they will become the instruments of each other's torture; any reciprocal confidence, between people of their character, seldom fails to have that effect.

The fate of those two persons, and other incidents with which I have been acquainted, since my last return to England, incline me to Mr. Darnley's opinion, that vice, and abjectness of conduct, though they should elude the grasp of law, generally meet with severe punishment even in this world.

I am not acquainted with a man of more thorough good sense, more calmness of temper, and what I take to be one of the rarest qualities to be met with among mankind, more entirely free from every species of affectionation, than that gentleman. His wife was one of the last who gave credit to the rumours against Mrs. Demure; and, of all her numerous acquaintance, the person who felt the sincerest concern on their proving true. That

wretched woman's name being mentioned the other day, when I was with Mr. and Mrs. Darnley,—“ What a pity,” said the latter, “ that a woman of such a cultivated understanding, and so much good sense, should have proved so wicked.”

“ Depend upon it, my dear,” replied her husband, “ she has not so much good sense as has been imputed to her; for it requires no great penetration to perceive that uprightness, integrity, and somewhat of an independent spirit, lead with more certainty even to *worldly* prosperity than hypocrisy, fraud, and fawning.

“ Independent, therefore, of what will most assuredly take place in a future state, no person of a cultivated understanding, and thorough good sense, will choose the three latter for his guides.”

Though I am by no means convinced that the remark is just, I quoted, against his opinion, merely to draw an answer from him, the following passage in the Rambler, which had struck me a good deal:

“ The most obsequious slaves of pride, the

most rapturous of the gazers upon wealth, the most officious of the whisperers of greatness, are collected from seminaries appropriated to the study of wisdom and virtue *."

" If the observation is well founded," resumed Mr. Darnley, " it must proceed from persons of that description not having had sufficient opportunities of seeing what passes in the world ; if they had, they might have been induced, even from selfish motives, to adopt a different plan of conduct. I have lived much in the world, have been somewhat of an observer, and I am clearly of opinion, that, bad as the world is, and in spite of many exceptions, the obsequious slaves of pride, and officious whisperers of greatness, often meet with contempt than promotion ; and those who do succeed by such means, though they may be what is called prosperous, cannot be happy ; for who can be happy who is conscious of his own baseness. This consideration ought to deter every person of sound sense from searching for happiness in paths where there is no chance of

finding it, but," continued he, "I cannot help remarking that no man of my acquaintance has more reason than you, Mr. Mordaunt, to believe that *spirit, generosity, and benevolence*, are the best guides to happiness even in this world; since, without these, you never would have gained the heart and the hand of one of the most accomplished and agreeable women in it."

You need not doubt that I received this compliment as I ought, and with the more satisfaction, because Horatia was included. This leads me to what I wished to inform you of.

Though you were at pains to remove all my objections against matrimony, particularly that founded on my unlucky propensity to tire of every enjoyment, yet I have furnished you with so many instances of it, that I should not be surprised if your solicitude for my happiness still gave you uneasiness on that account.

In the first place, however, I must acknowledge that no arguments would have

been able to have overcome my prejudice, unaffected by the attractions of Horatia ; I felt them, indeed, so powerful, that I am by no means certain that I should not, contrary to all argument and common sense, have offered her marriage, even although I had been sure of repenting in a month. You, see, my dear lord, what a philosopher your brother is :— but, however enthusiastically fond I was of her then, I have the happiness of assuring you now, that the three months I have lived with her have only added fresh esteem to undiminished love.

Three months you will think no great trial. But what chance is there of change where the sources of constancy are always augmenting ? I declare to you, that I did not know half the value of this charming woman when I first fell in love with her. I perceived, indeed, beauty, cheerfulness, and sensibility beaming from every feature of her countenance ; I saw politeness without restraint, and gaiety devoid of boldness in the whole of her manner ; and I heard observ-

tions replete with good sense, and characteristic of a just taste, flow from her lips; but I could not then know the extent of her benevolence, nor the readiness and warmth of her friendship.—She flew with exultation to me lately with a letter just received. “What joyful news!” cried she: “the dear marchioness has had a happy meeting with her husband—they are comfortably situated.—Oh, thanks be to heaven!”

The sensibility of Horatia’s character appears in genuine sympathy with the good and bad fortune of her friends, and in the zeal and activity with which she endeavours to serve them; but she never displays sensibility, as too many women do, in startings, tremors, and faintings, at every sudden noise or alarm: it is a great misfortune when this proceeds from weakness; when from affectation, it is a greater;—one deserve compassion, the other contempt; but both are exceedingly troublesome to all around.

Her serenity on such occasions, she has told me, she owes to the provident good sense

of her parents, who familiarised her, from her childhood, with such noises and sights as are apt to terrify without being dangerous.

It is surprising how very little time Horatia passes at her toilet; and yet no woman is more becomingly dressed;—she ties a handkerchief around her head, pulls her hair over her brow, and she appears in a style of beauty which the friseur labours to give other women in vain. She is endowed with a graceful elasticity of body, as well as mind, which appears in all her exercises.—I do not know whether you have remarked it; but I think that those women who are sluggish and ungraceful in their actions are generally drawling in their manner of speaking, slovenly in their dress, and not unfrequently peevish in their temper.

Peevishness is a disease of the mind to which Horatia is an entire stranger;—cheerfulness is the natural colour of her temper, which may be shaded by grief, but never can be obscured by a quality, of which Dr. Johnson has well said, “ that it can be borne only

when it is despised."—She herself once said to me, " If I had originally felt any tendency to peevishness, ill-nature, or envy, the conversation and example of lady Diana Franklin would have removed it."

Next to lady Diana, her most esteemed and confidential friend is Mrs. Sommers;—the delicate and affectionate solicitude that Horatia manifested during her friend's illness, which she *returned with answering looks of sympathy and love*, was the most affecting scene I ever witnessed.

That the woman who captivates my heart is the chosen companion of Sommers's Juliet gives me additional interest in both, and fills my mind with ideas of lasting felicity. Your approbation, so warmly expressed, has the same delightful effect.

The business which forced me to town is now almost over;—I shall expect you on Monday; and, if it suits you, we will set out the day after for Oxfordshire. Mr. and Mrs. Darnley express great pleasure in the hopes of seeing you arrive with me:—Lady Diana is al-

ready there ; she writes to me, that Horatia is particularly pleased with the humour and character of Travers :—I rejoice to hear it—I wish her to love all my friends. Sommers she has long esteemed in a supreme degree.

Friendship's great laws, and Love's superior powers,
Must mark the colour of my future hours *.

For so much happiness I am conscious of
owing heaven

The debt immense of endless gratitude †

I remain, my dear Brother,
most affectionately yours,

J. MORDAUNT.

* Prior. † Milton.

FINIS.



